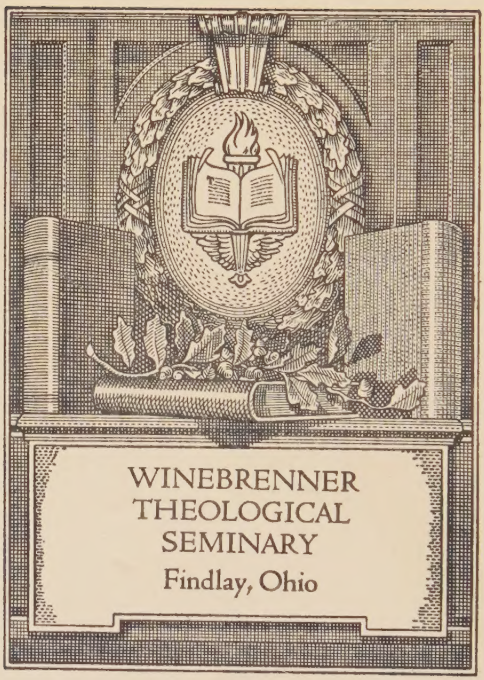
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AND WAS MADE MAN

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS

BY

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PREFACE

Described as an introduction to the study of the Gospels, this book contains little or nothing of the material usually comprised under such a heading. There is no discussion of textual criticism, no attempt to trace the literary history of the various documents, no sketch of the geographical and historical setting of the Gospel story. So many excellent books treating of these subjects already exist that it is unnecessary for one who has nothing new to say on them to traverse once more the well-trodden ground. But in the course of more than ten years' experience of attempting to teach theology in two Oxford Colleges, I became increasingly convinced of the need of directing more attention than is often done to certain theological and philosophical questions as *prolegomena* to the study of the Gospels. The students who came to take the Theological Schools commonly revealed themselves at the beginning of their course as tending towards one or other of two opposite Christological views condemned in early centuries by the Church as heretical. Some, who had been brought up in pious Christian homes, when asked to formulate their answer to

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the question, "What think ye of Christ?" would be surprised to find their halting statements condemned in advance some centuries ago as Apollinarian; others, whose avenue to the study of theology had been by way of devotion won through study of "the manhood of the Master," would possibly be less perturbed at discovering themselves to be adoptionists. These preconceptions had to be discounted before tutor and pupil could begin to discuss the Gospels intelligibly together; so long as either suspected the other of not really believing that when our Lord asked a question it was because He wanted to know the answer, no progress could be made; somehow or other a *modus colloquendi* had to be found. In the search for this I found, as so often happens in philosophical questions, that I was continually being driven back from the question immediately at issue to deeper questions whose consideration was necessary as a prior step towards the solution of that in hand. Hence came the conviction that such topics as those raised in this book need to be discussed as *prolegomena* to the study of the Gospels.

From time to time the professional student of theology, who knows something of the complexity and difficulty of the problems which lie in the way of arriving at any historical account of Christ, is struck by the vast success achieved by some popular writer who, gaily ignoring these difficulties and the careful, scientific and often

productive study which has been devoted to them, puts forth his impression as "the truth at last." But so long as Christians are nourished in church or Sunday school on unintelligent methods of Bible study, and are not encouraged themselves to grow in wisdom in their religious life, so long they will be a prey to this kind of writing. What I have aimed at in this book is to provide, not a "life of Christ," or any substitute for the study of the Gospels themselves, but an aid to their intelligent study which may help readers to discriminate between what is, and what is not, legitimate interpretation.

In 1925 I published four brief lectures under the title of "The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetic." In the preface to that book I expressed the hope that some day I should be able to deal more at length with some of the points too briefly passed over in those lectures. The present volume may be regarded as a first instalment of the fulfilling of that hope. The next stage, time and other circumstances permitting, will be the development of the material contained in Chapter V of this book into a fuller treatment of the doctrine of the Atonement.

My thanks are due to many friends who have helped me with criticism and advice. In particular I should mention my colleague, Professor Burton S. Easton of the General Theological Seminary, who has read the manuscript and given me the benefit of his criticism. He is not, of course, responsible for any of the views expressed

in this book ; but where I consciously differ from him, it is always with diffidence, fear and trembling. Nor should I omit to mention my wife, to whom I am indebted for very great assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press.

L. H.

Essex, N.Y.
April 1928.

CONTENTS

Chapter I. The Gospels and Christology

PAGE

The faith of the primitive Church was the source in history both of Christology and of the Gospels. Christology is a study both historical and philosophical, and the Gospels are the touchstone of every christological theory. The traditional Christology of the Christian Church must be tested by this touchstone with the aid of modern Gospel criticism. The aim of this book is to help towards apprehending the Gospel picture of Christ rather than to discuss christological theory 1

The faith of the primitive Church was expressed in dramatic religious terms; when philosophical reflection began "divine suffering" appeared to be nonsense, and it took four centuries to reach Chalcedon. To-day "divine ignorance" corresponds to the "divine suffering" of the first century 8

Chapter II. The Nature of the Authority of Christ's Teaching

Refusal to admit the element of human ignorance implied in the Incarnation often results from fear of undermining the authority of Christ. This fear arises from neglect of the philosophical problem of universal and particular as found in moral judgments. To be human means to recognise the universal in the particular; to do this rightly in the moral sphere requires knowledge of circumstances, wisdom, and consecration 13

Two views contrasted: (1) the view that Christ incarnate was omniscient and so a reliable Guide for life; (2) the view that He was not omniscient and is therefore no guide in present-day problems. In contrast with both it is argued that in solving the problems of His own life from the standpoint of One who lived His life in continuous unbroken communion with the Father He has given us all the guidance that it is reasonable to expect . . . 22

Chapter III. The Mind of Christ

PAGE

We shall expect to find in the Gospels evidence that, while incarnate, our Lord's mind was confined to dealing with particular problems arising out of His own earthly experience, as well as evidence that He dealt with them as one at home "in the heavenly places." The evidence on both sides fulfils this expectation 31

Three subsidiary questions: (1) The possibility of temptation without sin; (2) The distinction between culpable and inculpable ignorance; (3) The possibility of voluntary ignorance 42

Chapter IV. Eschatology

The Eschatological School of Gospel interpretation has made it impossible to maintain a certain distinction between the things which our Lord could know as man and those which He could not. We can trace a way into His human mind through normal human channels for His thought about Himself 48

The so-called eschatological problem raises the wider question of Christ's attitude towards the supernatural. To say that He did not teach metaphysics is a half-truth; though He did not think or speak in metaphysical terms but in the dramatic language of religion, yet He committed Himself to positions open to metaphysical attack and defence. The earliest Christian Creed was a dramatic view of the universe, including the Messiahship of Jesus, which sooner or later must stand the fire of metaphysical criticism 57

Two elements are interwoven at the heart of Christ's teaching: (1) a view of the universe which is "supernatural" through and through, and (2) the primacy of ethics in His conception of God. He claims to be Messiah, but only as representing a God who is righteous love. Certain sayings concerning the end of the world are discussed as incidental 63

Chapter V. Rewards and Punishments

Christ's sayings about rewards and punishments, and His reference to His death as a "ransom" cannot be dismissed on grounds of literary criticism. Discussion of them raises anew the question of divine punishment. Punishment in human society is a corporate act of a community disapproving an act done in its name by one of its members 75

PAGE

The Abelardian theory of Atonement raises more difficulties than it solves, and is mistaken in assuming that when sin is committed the damage done is confined to the state of the sinner's soul. Forgiveness implies absorbing the pain caused by sin in such a way as to make it the instrument of good. Every sin is a double attack on the goodness of God, who, being both Source and End of all human action, must in both relations neutralise its power for evil. Hence a demand for a doctrine of Atonement is implicit in any optimistic view of the universe 86

Christianity makes an act of faith in which the death of Christ is recognised as an act of God fulfilling this demand. It thus makes possible the forgiveness of those who have never heard of it. With regard to those who remain wilfully impenitent, it is impossible to decide between universalism and conditional immortality; but it does matter eternally how this life is lived 95

These truths presented themselves to our Lord in the form which they would naturally take when expressed as elements in the Jewish religion of His time, and the source of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement is to be found in His own teaching 105

Chapter VI. Miracles

The Gospel miracles cannot now be treated as evidences of Christ's divinity. The question of their credibility cannot be treated as a matter of "purely historical" criticism. The questions of who Christ was and what He did are inextricably intertwined, and we need to avoid both undue scepticism and undue credulity 111

The Virgin Birth and the Resurrection may be considered together. In view of the difficulty of defining either "physical body" or "spiritual body" it is best not to try to describe in detail *how* our Lord rose. Nor do we *know* that a unique method of entry upon and departure from His human life was essential to the Incarnation. It is possible to be a good Christian without holding that it was so; nevertheless it is not unduly credulous to believe that it was 122

A similar attitude of suspended judgment towards the "mighty works" ascribed to Christ is impossible; they are too closely woven into the texture of the documents. Consideration of what is meant by "faith" renders the healing miracles credible, but the nature-miracles present more difficulty. Belief in them is probably the result of prior faith in Christ and of experience of His power in the believer's own life 131

Chapter VII. Outlines of the Life

PAGE

The Gospels are not biographies, the material they contain is insufficient for the writing of a "life" of Christ, and the evidence for the chronological order of the events is very doubtful 142

Christ's first preaching was probably not a proclamation of His Messiahship but an ethical message calling for repentance as the first step towards the Kingdom of God. This was what the circumstances required, and in His human life He found in the circumstances that faced Him the Father's will. He preached openly, did works of healing, and met with great popularity 145

The miracles and popularity became hindrances rather than helps towards preparing the way for His full message, and opposition arose clearly tending towards an accusation of blasphemy with its penalty of death. So He withdrew from public preaching and concentrated on training those who should carry on the work when He was gone. The turning-point of this period at Cæsarea Philippi shows Him determined to face the issue as soon as the disciples were ready. When they were, He went up to Jerusalem and openly claimed Messiahship 155

This outline sketch, while confessedly hypothetical, (1) is consistent with the Marcan order, (2) is consistent with the evidences of "the mind of Christ" studied in previous chapters, and (3) represents Him as ordering His steps according to the Father's will as revealed in the course of events from day to day. It attempts to avoid ascribing to our Lord the wrong sort of supernaturalism, and to seek objectivity in the only way possible . . 162

Chapter VIII. The Fourth Gospel

The question must be raised whether the portrayal of Christ in the Fourth Gospel is consistent with that in the Synoptics. There is no agreement among scholars as to the date, authorship, or *provenance* of the Fourth Gospel, and the extent to which it is historical cannot be decided apart from a consideration of the characterisation of our Lord given in it 170

The impression of a contrast between the character of Christ in the synoptic Gospels and in St. John is due to the influence of Christian piety as much as to that of F. C. Baur. But in spite of the clear indications of the author's belief in our Lord's divinity, it is a mistake to think of the picture he has drawn as that of one overwhelmingly divine. We tend to read this belief into our

PAGE

interpretation of the Gospel, and thus create our own difficulties. The examination of a number of passages shows the Christ of the Fourth Gospel to be overwhelmingly and "staggeringly" human, and to be living His human life in conscious dependence on the Father . . 183

While it is impossible to accept the view that the Fourth Gospel is an elaborate allegory or a treasury of concealed *gnosis*, there is room for variety of opinion on the extent to which its form was dictated by the requirements of literary style. Compared with the Synoptics it is like the memories of a friend compared with an "obituary notice," and the question needs to be asked whether the synoptic Gospels are credible apart from such a portrait of our Lord as is given in the Fourth Gospel . . . 206

EPILOGUE

In all human studies it is difficult to avoid "subjectivity," and especially in that of history, which unites the work of scientist, philosopher, and artist. Moreover, the study of Jesus Christ must inevitably be based upon the religious experience of the student himself. All that can be done is to avow this openly, and to confess that the Object of the study passes beyond the student's comprehension and leads him to find in Jesus Christ One far beyond his understanding as man, One whom he is compelled to worship as God 209

INDEX 215

AND WAS MADE MAN

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GOSPELS

CHAPTER I

The Gospels and Christology

i.

There are probably few young theologians who have not at some time or other been seized with the desire to write a treatise on Christology. It is not common in these days to deny the humanity of Christ, but in what sense He may be called divine, and in what way we are to think of His divinity combining with His humanity in a life which is the life of one person, are questions much open to debate. The traditional formula of the Christian Church which speaks of Christ as being "two natures in one person" is no longer an accepted starting-point for thought, but is itself the centre of controversy. Some set out to defend it as the best possible statement of the mystery of Christ's being; some go forth to attack it as irrational and absurd; others, looking upon it as once valuable but now out of

date and useless, make the adventure of trying to find some re-statement which shall be more satisfactory to the thought of the present day.

What, then, must be to-day the starting-point of any and every Christological inquiry? One might be inclined to reply at once that it must be, of course, the Gospel narrative. But we should not be in too great a hurry to assume that the question is a simple one, or this answer adequate. For if the point at issue be the conflict between the Catholic doctrine of Christ as God incarnate and views which stop short of attributing to Him Deity in the sense intended by that doctrine, then to concentrate on the Gospel narrative is to consider in isolation evidence which by itself is an insufficient basis of discussion. From the point of view of Catholic orthodoxy, that narrative is concerned almost entirely with the incarnate life of Christ from the Annunciation to the Crucifixion, and if we begin by confining our attention to the period when the godhead of Christ was temporarily veiled, shall we ever pass beyond that to the apprehension of His essential divine nature? The late Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, Dr. Henry Scott Holland, was never tired of impressing upon his hearers that the Gospels are records written after the Resurrection by men who just because of their faith in the Resurrection believed in the godhead of their Lord, and just because of that belief treasured their memories of the days of His flesh—days when so completely had His godhead been veiled

that even they had been unable to apprehend it. Nor is it only from the point of view of the Catholic believer that there is raised this objection to studying the Gospels alone. The work of the *Religionsgeschichtliche* School of New Testament criticism leads towards the same conclusion.[1] If our aim were to approach Christology from the side of its historical origin we should have to begin with the worship of the primitive Church rather than with the story of Jesus of Nazareth, with the Epistles and Acts rather than with the Gospels.

Again, there is a wholly different starting-point which has to be considered, that of the philosophical and psychological pre-suppositions with which we approach the question. In the traditional thought of the Church the doctrine of Christ's person has its place in a coherent view of the universe in which there appear, each in place in the ordered system, God, Man, and the Incarnation. The Christological problem is here the problem of *understanding what is meant* by the Incarnation, by " the union of two natures in one person." To study it will involve not merely a historical but also a philosophical inquiry. It leads us to ask what we mean by God and what by Man, what is our conception of creation, and what it means—if, indeed, it means anything at all—to speak of godhead and manhood as uniting to form a single personal being. It is conceivable that a devout believer who set

[1] On this subject see A. E. J. Rawlinson : *The Doctrine of the Christ in the New Testament.* (Longmans, 1926.)

out on such an inquiry might come to the conclusion that the formula is, indeed, quite unmeaning, that the existence of such a being as the incarnate God of orthodox Christianity is an absurd impossibility. In such a case he would have to choose whether to revise his history or his philosophy. In any case, in Christological theory history and philosophy must meet, and the Christological thinker may set out on his quest from either shore.

But whether he start from the worship of the primitive Church or from his own philosophical reflections, sooner or later he must come to view the historic Christ of the Gospels, and by his success or failure in accounting for that Figure and in explaining it he will stand or fall.

The Gospels, then, if not the starting-point, are the touchstone of Christological theory, and we must always test ourselves by asking whether we can recognise the Christ of our thought in the Christ of history. But here another difficulty presents itself. If a Christology must be able to assimilate the Gospel picture, so that that picture goes to the making of the theory, equally will the theory go to influence our reading of the Gospel narrative and help to determine the portrait we find therein. In any attempt to arrive at a true portrait of the Jesus of history we are faced by this difficulty. While our general conception of His character must be built up on an investigation of the several incidents, each incident nevertheless depends for its interpretation and understanding on the general conception. For

example, where Christ is said to have cursed the barren fig-tree, why do we not look upon it as a discreditable exhibition of bad temper rising out of disappointment ?

It is impossible, then, to divorce scientific Gospel study from Christology. Conviction of the truth of this statement has led to the writing of this book. Its aim may now briefly be sketched.

Many and various attempts have been made to arrive at the historic Christ. For any theologian trained in Oxford of recent years the natural method of approaching this task will be by way of a rigid critical examination of the documentary evidence, by an attempt to apply with the utmost possible strictness the canons of literary and historical criticism. Knowing how much there is to be said on both sides of most questions, he will be very chary of committing himself to any definite statement, and he will shrink from building upon any particular interpretation of this or that text, unless it is certain that it can have but one meaning. Hence for the most part he will be tongue-tied, for there are very few such texts ; and he will content himself with cataloguing various possible interpretations, and leaving the reader to take his choice. But a time comes when he tires of a method so inevitably inconclusive, and feels that he must try to make up his mind, to decide which interpretation seems to him the most probable, to make a constructive attempt to set forth the life of Christ on earth. He will, for example, assert that in this or that message Christ uses the phrase " Son

of Man" as a definitely Messianic title without waiting until it is demonstratively certain that it can have no other sense. Finding the absurdity of trying to treat history as an exact science, he will try to see whether the application of a general conception of Christ to the several incidents will not provide at least as simple and as reasonable an interpretation of them as any other, and as in his own meditation on the several incidents of the Gospel story that conception of the character of his Lord becomes fuller and richer in content and springs to life before his eyes, he will try to set it forth to others to see whether it may meet with their acceptance too.

Many and various attempts have been made to arrive at the historic Christ. To me there is one hypothesis which seems to go much further than any other I have met to illuminate the several incidents of the Gospel story, when all the help which modern literary and historical criticism offer have been used in the attempt to reconstruct the incarnate life of Christ. It is in all essentials that which has been the faith of the Catholic Church, which is commonly called the theory of two natures in one person, but which we had perhaps better call, in simple non-technical language, the belief that the life of Christ on earth is the incarnate life of one who is both divine and human. That life will appear, no doubt, very different from the presentations of it which would have been made a hundred years ago. The progress which has been made in the critical study of the New Testament has led

undoubtedly to new possibilities of understanding it, and by making use of this teaching we may hope to find a picture of Christ which is not only Christian but also historically probable, which is acceptable both by the intellect and the heart. In this hope, and as a contribution to the painting of such a picture, this book has been written.

There is more to be said about the relation of Christological inquiry in general to the study of the Gospels. In many fields of thought the difficulties which arise are born of the attempt to analyse and state in rational theory things which in actual existence seem natural and credible. One remembers, for example, Professor Eddington's delightful description of the contrast between " the learned physicist and the man in the street " who were about to enter a room, how " the man in the street moved forward without trouble, planted his foot on a solid unyielding plank at rest before him, and entered. The physicist was faced with an intricate problem."[1] Again, after the reading of some psychological works written in the attempt to discover what is meant by the conception of " the self," one may rise with a feeling that no such absurd creature as a man could possibly exist. And yet in ordinary life we find no difficulty in taking for granted the existence of ourselves and of the men and women around us. So, too, with Christ. Our Lord, after all, was not engaged in acting or stating a Christological theory but in living

[1] For the details of his problem see *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 189. (N.Y., Macmillan, 1925.)

a life, and we must not conclude that, because we fail to analyse and find a *rationale* of that life, it never can have been lived. It may be that the reason why the pious unreflective Christian does not find the difficulties which beset the theologian, as both contemplate the figure of Christ, is that he is not attempting to analyse and understand the being of his Lord, but merely to know Him as the living object of worship and communion. So in this book, though as theologians we must seek to understand wherever we may, yet our main purpose must be to set forth the living Christ as He was, and we must needs be content with that where He passes beyond the bounds of our comprehension.

ii.

The original Christology, we have said, was that of the primitive Church, the Church of the Acts and the Epistles. This was a religious rather than a philosophical creed, based on a view of the universe which may be called dramatic. God is thought of as a personal Creator and Ruler, this world as the scene of the drama of creation and redemption. It is religious picture-thinking, not the abstract thought of metaphysics, and it finds a place for Christ as playing the part of Messiah in the divine drama.

Sooner or later such a belief must always submit to the fire of philosophical criticism. The dramatic language of religion is true or false

according as the picture it gives of the nature of reality is an accurate representation of it or not, and it can only establish its claim to truth by being thought out metaphysically. This process the Christian creed soon entered upon, and it is not yet complete.[1]

"We preach Christ crucified," said St. Paul, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness." If the Jews found difficulty in the thought of a crucified Messiah, that was nothing to the absurdity presented to the Gentile philosopher in the idea of a divine sufferer. "'If he suffered,' said the Ebionites, 'he was not divine.' 'If he was divine,' answered the Docetists, 'his sufferings were unreal.'"[2] These were the first judgments passed on the Christian faith in the philosophical world. The idea of a divine sufferer was just nonsense, a contradiction in terms, a belief which would at once rule out its holder as incapable of election to any *symposium* of philosophers. From this point of view we can arrive at a true estimate of the much-debated Definition of Chalcedon. It may be that to us to-day it is of little value as a solution of our problems; but when it was first put forward it must have brought relief to many minds for this reason, that it enabled the belief which had seemed to be just nonsense to be stated as a reasonable tenet in the philosophical language of the day. The Church had clung to its twofold belief in One who was divine and yet suffered; and now

[1] See below, pp. 57 ff., 95 ff.

[2] Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism* (Cambridge, 1900), p. 6.

that belief had come into its own as an intelligible doctrine acceptable by men of sense.

To-day it is the problem of the knowledge of the incarnate Christ which is in the forefront of discussion. The question became acute as a result of the higher criticism of the Old Testament, when Christ's use of the Jewish Scriptures was considered. Bishop Gore's outspoken assertion of the limitation of knowledge involved in the Incarnation marked an epoch in English popular theology. The work of the eschatological school has enlarged the sphere within which we may have to admit this limitation,[1] and the modern interest in psychological problems has fastened attention on this aspect of the Christological inquiry. We ask now how we are to think of one person with two consciousnesses, with divine omniscience and human limitation of knowledge.

This exceedingly difficult problem would have to be tackled in any treatise on Christology. It cannot be ignored in any present-day study of the Gospels; but we need not wait for its solution before we proceed to our own task.

There seems to be a very real historical parallel between the situation in which the Christian faith found itself when first it entered the field of philosophy and that in which it finds itself to-day. Then the thought of One who was divine and yet suffered seemed to be just nonsense, and it took some four centuries or more of hard thinking on the part of men who refused

[1] See below, chap. iv. pp. 50–53.

to give up either the divinity or the suffering before relief was found at Chalcedon. So now belief in One who was both divine and ignorant seems self-contradictory and absurd, so much so that keen defenders of orthodox belief in the divinity of Christ think it fatal to their cause to admit any interpretation of the Gospels which implies ignorance on the part of our Lord. But can this be done without a direct refusal to accept the evidence of the Gospels, honestly interpreted as historical documents meaning what they say? I think not.

"'If he suffered,' said the Ebionites, 'he was not divine.' 'If he was divine,' answered the Docetists, 'his sufferings were unreal.'" "If he was ignorant," says the rationalist, "he was not divine." "If he was divine," answers the obscurantist, "he was not ignorant." But as once the Church clung to belief in her divine Lord without surrendering belief in the historical memories of His passion, and came at last to Chalcedon, so again if we are both faithful to our belief in His divinity and accept honestly the evidence of the Gospels as to the history of His incarnation, we shall pass to our Chalcedon. It may be that we who are now alive shall not live to experience the relief that a solution of the problem of the twofold consciousness of Christ could bring to our minds. It took four centuries or more to think out the problem in terms of the old philosophy. It may take as long again in those of the new. But "he that believeth shall not make haste."

The historical origin of belief in the divinity of Christ is to be found, we have seen, in the experience of the primitive Church after the Resurrection rather than in that of the disciples in the days when His godhead was so veiled that even the best of them failed to grasp it. So we, in tracing again the story of those days, need not fear to accept with the most utter honesty the evidence of the Gospels, even when they tell of His ignorance, always remembering that the ignorance is the ignorance of God incarnate, and finding perhaps that the love and the condescension of Him who "for our sake and for our salvation . . . was made man" were even greater than we had ever thought.[1]

[1] For further discussion of The Incarnation and Christology, such as falls outside the plan of this book, I may refer to my contribution to *Essays on The Trinity and The Incarnation.* (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1928).

CHAPTER II

The Nature of the Authority of Christ's Teaching

i.

To the faithful Christian who has been accustomed to look upon the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels as an authoritative guide for life, the suggestion that the Incarnation involved the experiencing of human ignorance by God incarnate is apt, at first sight, to appear catastrophic. The admission of what has been called in the previous chapter the "ignorance" of Christ seems to lead inevitably towards the undermining of His authority, and it is doubtless fear of this unwelcome result which has often led to strenuous efforts being made to avoid accepting at its face value what is the plain evidence of the Gospels. Before we approach directly the study of the Gospel picture of our Lord it will be well to turn aside and consider whether there are any justifiable grounds for this fear.

I believe the fear to be quite unnecessary, but in order to argue the point I shall have to be allowed to assume certain philosophical positions which do not by any means command

universal assent, and to state them as briefly as I may. No other course is open to a writer who desires to put forward what he has come to believe instead of merely cataloguing divergent views and leaving his readers to take their choice.

The philosophical problem which underlies the point at issue is that of the relation between what are called " particulars " and " universals." In this world of time and space we are immediately confronted with particulars such as particular things, particular statements, particular actions. But each of these only exists at all as the particular instance of some universal, each man a particular instance of manhood, each statement of truth or falsehood, each moral action of goodness or evil. It has, of course, long been a matter of dispute whether the particular or the universal is the real—whether, that is, what we call the universal is only a name given to a class of real particulars, or whether the particulars are unsubstantial images of the universals which alone are real. The slightest acquaintance with either the Greeks or the Schoolmen is enough to bring us in touch with champions of both views.

We need not enter into the details of this dispute. My own growing conviction is that Plato and the realists are right in asserting the transcendent reality of universals, but that to make the unreality of particulars a corollary of the reality of universals, or to think that by denying or ignoring the particular we can appre-

hend the universal, is to fall into error. It is enough for our immediate purpose if we recognise that in this world, the world in which was lived the incarnate life of Christ, everything that exists exists as the particular instance of a universal. The two are always combined. We never find a particular which is a mere particular and not the instance of a universal. We never find a universal except as manifested in some particular instance of it. Manhood is revealed in men, truth in truths and goodness in actions.

It is this which makes possible the activity of the human mind, and is the explanation of its methods. It works by recognising the universal in the particular. In science, for example, so long as some event is a mere particular event the mind of the inquirer is unsatisfied; only as he comes to recognise it as an instance of some universal law does he make any approach towards its understanding or find any satisfaction in his quest.

Let us now assume, great though the assumption be, the existence of the universals goodness, truth, and beauty as ultimate realities, themselves timeless and transcendent but in this world manifested in particular instances of themselves, and that the mind of man is capable of recognising them in their manifestations. It need not trouble us if we cannot define them, for two reasons. Definition is the description of a thing in terms of something other than itself, and clearly an ultimate reality cannot be stated in terms of anything but itself. Otherwise, it

would not be ultimate. Again, if we only knew these in the instances of them, we could not give an adequate description until we had investigated every conceivable instance, and only an omniscient being could perform this task. The specific virtue of the human mind, when unclouded by error, is its capacity to *recognise* goodness, truth, and beauty when it comes across instances of them, and we need not wait to practise this virtue until we know even as we are known.

The chief puzzle in the interrelation of universals and particulars comes from the very different particular forms in which a universal may manifest itself. Even in so simple an illustration as the three possible forms of the universal triangle this is apparent. It is in its very triangularity that an equilateral triangle differs from an isosceles or a scalene, and yet each is an equally good instance of that universal. How much greater is the puzzle in the case of such an universal as goodness. It is this, of course, which underlies the earlier part of Plato's "Republic." The impossibility of defining goodness by tying it down to one or other of its particular instances is there clearly shown.

The inadequacy of any attempt at such definition appears at once from two sides. On the one hand circumstances are easily imaginable in which the action commended would be not right but wrong. On the other, goodness turns up again in a new form not allowed for by the definition. The truth is that it is only in the

particular circumstances of each case that the right or wrong of it can appear, and all we can do is to trust to our powers of reading aright the circumstances of each case as it occurs, in order that we may then recognise the goodness, even though it manifest itself in some wholly new and unexpected form. It is always doing so, and it is this which gives life its interest. Here it is those who hate father or mother for Christ's sake who alone are fit for the Kingdom of God: there, those are condemned who call that by which they might have profited father or mother Corban, a gift consecrated to God.[1] It is by their fruits that the righteous are to be known, yet to those who have brought forth the most obvious fruits and cry "Lord, Lord," the answer may be: "I never knew you."[2] In these two striking contrasts our Lord shows the impossibility of laying down in advance what will be the right course of action under circumstances which have not yet arisen.

What makes life interesting to the human mind is its recognition of goodness, truth, and beauty. What is characteristically human in this experience is the finding of these three as they are mirrored in the particular happenings that befall the lives of men. For the moment we are concerned only with the first of these, goodness. Our contention is that in all the problems of practical life that confront us, if there be any moral issue involved at all, goodness

[1] Mk. vii. 9–13; Mt. xv. 3–6, x. 37; Lk. xiv. 25–27.
[2] Mt. vii. 15–23.

and evil, right and wrong are there to be discovered, and one or other must be chosen and followed. These are single and eternal, but infinitely various in their manifestations, and as we are both foolish and wayward we often make mistakes in our decisions. It will help us if we try to discover the source of these errors.

What we call conscience I believe to be a power of recognising the rightness and wrongness of actions, parallel to the power we have of recognising truth and beauty. It has this peculiar characteristic, that we cannot recognise the rightness of a certain course of action without at once experiencing a certain feeling, a feeling which only accompanies this recognition and is stirred up by it alone, the feeling that what is right *ought* to be done. This feeling may be called the sense of obligation. We are not concerned with it now, and need say no more about it. But to avoid confusion on a subject where there is often such confusion, it was necessary to point out that the element of feeling found in the activity of conscience is a specific feeling stirred up by the recognition of the rightness or wrongness of an action. In the language of certain psychologists, it is the "affect" proper to the "cognition" of moral obligation, and, given the cognition, the feeling comes whether we like it or no. We may, of course, disregard it in planning our actions, and by consistency in such a course our susceptibility to it may become blunted or atrophied; but that is another question.

Fundamentally, then, the work of conscience is to consider actions done or actions proposed, and to read off what they have to teach of goodness and evil, of right and wrong. Now, what is necessary for a right judgment to be made ?

Seeing that the judgment must always be concerned with a particular case, we need first to know all the relevant circumstances of the case. This is often simply impossible, especially when we are thinking about proposed actions. We often have to act at once, and on very insufficient information. " Ought I, or ought I not, to give half a crown to this beggar ? " It may be that the most important thing to know is the man's character, and how he will respond to my dealing with him, and of that I have no knowledge. Perhaps a spontaneous act of generosity on my part will be just the thing required to win him, and the very delay of questioning will spoil it all. Perhaps, having given him the money, I shall afterwards come to say : " Well, if I had known *that*, I should never have acted so foolishly." What am I to do ? Dr. L. P. Jacks, in his delightful tale, " Bracketed First," [1] well illustrates such a puzzle as this.

We have frequently to act on insufficient information, to make, as it were, a leap in the dark, to walk by faith and not by sight. What we need most here is common sense, and above all common sense at its best, when it is the

[1] Reprinted in *The Magic Formula* (New York and London, 1927).

insight of ripe wisdom. Here, again, the parallel between the recognition of goodness and of truth may be seen, for both grow by education and use. The mind which at first can make nothing of the *pons asinorum* in Euclid (or whatever corresponds to it in the emasculated curriculum of to-day) learns to solve not only that but far harder theorems; and so we may learn both from our successes and our mistakes to grow in wisdom as we grow in years. So, too, we seek advice from the ripe wisdom of those who have profited much from rich experience of life and inspire us with confidence in their value as counsellors.

When a problem of action confronts us, then, we have to consider all its circumstances, and to spare no effort to know them as fully as we can. We need, too, wisdom as we contemplate them, if we are to find the right solution, for all the knowledge in the world will be of little use if wisdom is lacking. And for the Christian such wisdom is a gift of God, which, like all God's gifts, cannot be received and used except by the faithful soul. "Where shall wisdom be found? And what is the price of understanding? Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

To speak of the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom may be a mistaken rendering of a Hebrew text, but nevertheless, in the ordinary sense in which it is understood by the uncritical English reader of the Psalms, the

phrase expresses a deep truth. We may know as much as can be known of the circumstances of the action which is before us; we may be far from being stupid, or lacking in common sense, so far as our natural mental capacity is concerned; but we shall not see things as God sees them unless our outlook is God's outlook. And to see things as God sees them is to see them as they are. We must, then, share the outlook of God if we are to read aright the problems of life. How can this be done unless we love what God loves, want what God wants, long to see those things happen which cause joy in Heaven, and strive to bring about what God would have done—unless, that is, our wills are one with the will of God?

The truth of this dependence of wisdom upon outlook seems to me so clear as to need no labouring, but to many minds it often appears to involve confusion between intellectual and other factors, so that it may be worth while to exhibit it by means of a few simple illustrations. I remember once meeting a hard-headed business man bred in the faith of the gospel of worldly success. It is no exaggeration to say that so complete was his conviction of money-making being the chief duty of man that the state of mind of a man who did not want to make money had for him all the colour of what a Christian would call sin. It shocked him just as idolatry would have shocked a prophet of the Old Testament.

Again, there are times in the lives of all

Christians when we have some difficult problem of action to decide, and what troubles us most is the question whether we are really desirous of doing the will of God, or whether our vision is beclouded by other more worldly desires of our own. We need, it is true, to beware of a petti-fogging over-scrupulosity, but it is sometimes the bitterness of our own sense of inadequate conversion which leads us to see for ourselves the truth of our Lord's saying that when the eye is single the whole body is full of light. We bear witness to this same truth when we turn for advice, as we naturally do, to those whose lives suggest to us that their wills are truly consecrated to the service of God.

Once again the whole life of Christ on earth, as we shall see later, is an illustration of this truth. The tragedy of it was that when He came to His own people with His conception of the Kingdom of God as the only thing worth living and dying for, He came to those for whom the Kingdom of God, whether they thought of it as to be set up in this world or in Heaven, was to bring the realisation of aims which were not the aims of the Father as He was known to our Lord. From this clash of opposing views it came about in the history of this world that only by His death could that Kingdom be set up.

ii.

Let us now try to gather together some of the various lines of argument put forward in this

chapter, and return with them to the question from which we set out on these inquiries—the question whether the authority of Christ's teaching is undermined by a belief in the humanity of His mind during the period of His humiliation. The position to which we are led will appear most clearly if we first set down two opposing views which seem to be untenable, and put it beside them in contrast.

(1) On the one hand, there is the old view of uncritical piety which ascribes to Christ a miraculous foreknowledge of the lives of each of us, and thinks of Him as laying down in advance what we are to do in each situation as it arrives. From such a reading of Christ's Cleansing of the Temple springs the question asked a few years ago by a troubled Christian, whether it is not wrong to set up in a church a stand for the sale of parish magazines and other booklets.[1] Itself, the view springs from neglecting the fact that to be human, and to live under human conditions, means to live at a certain period of time in the history of the world, and within certain limitations of space, and to deal with the universals of goodness, truth, and beauty as they are manifested in the experience of the life so lived. It is a commonplace to apply this principle in the interpretation of Christ's answer to the question of the young man who had great possessions.[2] The Church has never taught the duty of absolute poverty

[1] See *The Sign*, Answers to Correspondents, April 1921.
[2] Mk. x. 17–22 ; Mt. xix. 16–22 ; Lk. xviii. 18–23.

as incumbent on all men. The contradictions mentioned above in Christ's teaching about duty to parents, and the importance of "fruits" show that it is to be given wider application, and our argument suggests that if we take the Incarnation seriously we shall apply it throughout the teaching of Christ.

(2) On the other hand, it has been maintained that the teaching of Christ is of no value in the present day, because He was dealing with the circumstances of His own time and of His own life, and they are very different from those which surround us. It has been said, for instance, that the social conditions of Palestine at the beginning of our era were so different from those of a modern industrial community that the Sermon on the Mount can be of no guidance to us in regulating the conduct of business, in facing our social problems, or in the development of international relations. Again, it has been said that the moral teaching of Christ was an *interimsethik* based on the belief that the world would come to an end in the lifetime of His hearers. Whatever the truth of this last statement (this we shall have to consider later) the same conclusion is often drawn by those who hold it, that the teaching of Christ, as it had reference to the circumstances of His own life and times, had reference to them only, and was of no use for future ages.

A similar argument would be that which maintains that because our Lord was Himself unmarried it is no use for those who are married

to look to His teaching for help in meeting the problems that confront them.

Such conclusions have no more claim to intelligence than what we have called the view of uncritical piety. The error of those who hold them lies in their neglect of the other side of that relation between universal and particular which we have seen to be involved in all that is or happens in this world of time and space. It is the eternal unity of the universal goodness, revealed in all its infinite manifestations, yet itself one and transcending them all, which they deny. It is belief in this which enables us to take seriously the Incarnation of Christ and yet to find in Him the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In His earthly life He may have been dealing throughout with the problems which confronted Him in that life, and His circumstances may have been very different from ours, but the goodness which is to be found and followed is one and the same in both.

(3) In contrast to these two views let us now try to give some positive general account of the way in which we may think of the moral authority of Christ. We think of Him as truly human in mind as well as in body, as growing from childhood in wisdom as in stature. The world in which He lives is the world of His own day, the problems He has to face are the problems of His own life, the knowledge He has at His disposal is the knowledge open to one in those circumstances. It is noteworthy that He does not attempt to go outside the limits of that

knowledge. When He is asked to decide the question of a disputed inheritance He declines, saying: "Who made me a judge or a divider?"[1] His prayer in Gethsemane ends with the words: "Howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt."[2]

But in all He does and all He says there is a certainty, a sureness of touch, which is far removed from our feeble and hesitating decisions. "He taught as having authority, and not as the scribes."[3] Whence came the sureness with which He solved the problems that came before Him? We have seen that the wisdom which we need in order to see our way through the moral problems we meet is born of such union between our wills and the will of God that we see as God sees, and therefore see things as they are. Now the picture of Christ in the Gospels is the picture of one who shared both the mind and the will of His Father. His communion with the Father was continuous and unbroken. At each stage of His human growth His human mind, possessed of such knowledge of the things of this world as was possible for a human mind at that stage, looked out upon them with the mind of God. So when judgment had to be passed or action taken, though there might be hesitation and pauses while the circumstances were unravelled, when once the time for decision came there was no delay. He spoke and acted as One with authority.

[1] Lk. xii. 14. [2] Mk. xiv. 36; Mt. xxvi. 39; Lk. xxii. 42.
[3] Mk. i. 22; Mt. vii. 28, 29; Lk. iv. 32.

It often seems to be thought that to speak of Christ as in the days of His humiliation limited to knowledge open to humanity is to introduce into His consciousness an element of error incredible to those who worship Him as God incarnate. Such a view rests on an unthinking acceptance of that misleading maxim: "To err is human." It assumes that because we ordinary human beings are stupid and often mistaken, humanity as such is characterised by proneness to error, even such humanity as was taken, according to traditional doctrine, by our Lord in His incarnation. Surely the mistake lies in making ourselves the standard of humanity and measuring our Lord's manhood by reference to ours. Of how much trouble in Christological theory this mistake has been the parent it is impossible here to speak. All we wish to do is to maintain that to speak of Christ's knowledge on earth as being essentially human knowledge is not to cast doubts upon it. It is Christ who is the one perfect man, and we must measure our manhood by the standard of His. We, with all our imperfections, have no experience of what moral insight might be open to perfect manhood. The Christian Faith, which speaks of Christ as being *perfect* Man, by that perfection guarantees the authority of His teaching even though, in the days of His humiliation, He were limited to the knowledge open to perfect manhood.

iii.

In what way, then, are we to find guidance in the life and teaching of Christ? What we need, as we face the problems of our lives, is to see them as they are, that is, to share God's outlook upon them. In the Gospels we find the picture of One who through all His human life shared the mind of His Father, who indeed, though He was perfectly human, looked out upon the world with the eyes of God. Now St. Paul claims for Christians that they "have the mind of Christ,"[1] and that, surely, is what we need. Of the parts played in the achieving of this by communion with the Risen Christ, and by the indwelling of the Spirit, we are not here concerned; our subject is the value of the Gospels as a guide to life. That value lies in this. It is in the Gospels that we find set forth the mind of Christ. It is as we see Him in the circumstances of His time, thinking and speaking about the people He met and the things He saw, reflecting on all His experience of life and showing by His words and deeds how they struck His mind, that we come to know the mind of Christ which is the mind of God. As we come to know it we come to share it, and as we come to share it we come to read aright the very different problems of our own lives and times, and to recognise anew the one eternal goodness in new varieties of its infinite manifestations.

[1] 1. Cor. ii. 16.

To ask to have our problems settled for us in advance, to refuse the duty of thinking them out for ourselves, is not only laziness but ignorance. It ignores the true nature of conscience, and the intrinsic impossibility of laying down in advance the right action in view of circumstances which have not yet arisen. Let anyone who doubts this read the sordid tale in which Marmaladoff in Dostoievsky's "Crime and Punishment" recounts how his daughter brought food to her starving family, and ask what shall be his judgment on her. Christ Himself never encouraged that form of laziness, that ignoring of the duty of moral thought. To John the Baptist asking whether He were indeed Messiah, to the Pharisees asking for a sign, His answer was in all essentials the same. One thing only is necessary, that the eye should be single and the body full of light.[1]

A very important result follows from this. It is impossible for those who would read their Gospels with intelligence to separate their devotional from their intellectual reading. To learn the mind of Christ we must see Him as He faced the problems which lay before Him in His human life, and study His sayings and His actions in relation to them. We need all the help we can gain from the historical study of the life and times of Christ to understand what He said and what He did, and when by these means we have set the scene, so to speak, we need to meditate daily on the character of the

[1] Mt. vi. 22 ; Lk. xi. 34–36.

Chief Person in that drama that we may come to know His mind and enter into it.

It is as an aid to that task that this book has been written. We are to try to sketch the outlines of the figure of Christ as historical insight and Christian meditation may reveal Him. We could make no advance until we were agreed to accept the Gospel evidence that during the life on earth of Him who for our sakes and for our salvation was made Man, our Lord in mind as in body was human in the sense that He dwelt with the infinite and eternal realities, goodness, truth, and beauty, as they were manifested in the particular experience of His life on earth. We have seen that to recognise this fact will not diminish the value of the Gospels in giving us a guide for life. We have seen, indeed, that so far from doing that, it will give us the only kind of guidance that we have a right to ask for, and that will give us the help we need. From this digression, then, we may now return to our main task of trying to see Christ as He was, confident that in doing so we are laying the surest foundation for that meditation on the Gospels which shall reveal to us the mind of Christ and lead us to find in Him the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

CHAPTER III

The Mind of Christ

i.

We have been occupied so far with somewhat abstract discussions. I have suggested that possibly the belief that Jesus was God incarnate may provide the simplest and most satisfactory explanation of the Gospel records. But we have seen reason to think that the godhead of Christ may not have *appeared* during the time of His humiliation in such a way as has often been assumed. In particular it has seemed probable that, in looking for the mind of God in the sayings of Christ, we ought not to expect to find Him pronouncing judgment *ex cathedra* on universal questions. The Divine mind is revealed, so to speak, by implication. That is to say, when we see how our Lord dealt with the particular problems which presented themselves to Him during His life on earth we find implied in His deeds and words a character which is the character of God.

Abstract discussions are of little use unless they are tested at every step by the facts they are attempting to understand and explain. We

must now ask what justification for the views put forward above can be found in the Gospels themselves.

The question of the originality of Christ's teaching seems often to be discussed in a very pedestrian manner. It appears to be thought that all that has to be done is to take the sayings of Christ on such subjects as ethics or eschatology, and to inquire in the case of each whether it has been anticipated in history by some teacher of whom our Lord may or must have known. Such study is indeed extremely valuable, but only by way of clearing the ground for our study of Christ Himself. Let us suppose that for every word of Christ authority could be found, if not in the letter of the Old Testament, in existing uncanonical Jewish works, or in the Traditions of the Elders. We should still have to ask why it was that He chose this view and neglected that. When, for instance, He rejected certain widely held views of what the Messiah and the Kingdom of God should be, even if the view which He chose instead had been found by Him in the Old Testament, what was the ground of His preference ?

If our exposition of Christ on earth is true, we shall expect to find in the Gospels evidence on two sides. On the one hand, there should be evidence that the originality and authority of His teaching is due to His looking out on the world with the mind of God. On the other hand, we shall not be surprised if we can find for all the ideas which present themselves to

Him a passage into His mind through what we may call ordinary human channels.

I do not wish here to enter upon a psychological discussion of the distinction between what is subjective and what objective in thought, or of what those terms mean. Our immediate task is simpler than this. It is to ask whether the Gospel narratives present the picture of one whose mind looks out on life from the point of view of God.

It is not easy for a man to convey in words the impression which has been forced upon him in his own study and meditation on the Gospels. But in dealing with this problem, all that can be done is to make this attempt, and that, therefore, is what I propose to do.

St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks repeatedly of an unseen spiritual world in the phrase translated in our English Versions as "the heavenly place." The phrase seems to me most apt to use in describing the Christ of the Gospels. His mind was normally at home in the heavenly places, and looked out thence upon the things of this world. I do not think it is necessary to labour this point. Let anyone consider simply St. Mark's presentation of our Lord; the calmness and self-possession with which He meets every crisis in His ministry, asserting His authority over the evil spirits, prepared with a ready answer to every question, equally undisturbed whether faced by a hungry multitude or by a military party come out to arrest Him, quietly asleep in the boat while His

disciples are at their wits' end for fear of the storm. Let anyone then consider the source of this quiet strength which is so marked in the character of Jesus. It cannot fail to be noticed how in the answers which come so readily to His tongue when He is faced with questions, one thought is always uppermost in His mind—the Father, and the Father's way of looking at things. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." It is God's will that is to be considered when thinking about marriage. Only God is good, and with Him all things are possible.[1] Then we notice indications of the place in His life that was given to communion with His Father, how He rose a great while before day for prayer, how He ascribed to prayer His power of casting out devils, how He prayed while the disciples were sleeping in Gethsemane.[2] When we consider these things together, is it possible to doubt that in that communion with the Father in the heavenly places was found the source of His power on earth? It is this which leads Him to offer first to the paralytic that which He Himself would think the greatest boon, forgiveness of sins[3]; it is this which makes Him surprised that the disciples should think that when He spoke of leaven He was worrying about anything so unimportant as the provision of bread.[4]

He looked out on the world, then, with a mind normally at home in the heavenly places. If our

[1] Mk. iii. 35; x. 9, 18, 27. [2] Mk. i. 35; ix. 29; xiv. 32–40.
[3] Mk. ii. 5. [4] Mk. viii. 17.

discussion were concerned with any other than Jesus Christ I do not think that the truth of this conception of Him would ever be denied. The existence of men inspired by such mystical communion with God is too well established in the history of religion for us to fail to recognise in Him an instance of the type. But in thinking of Christ, the fear of this very thing, the fear of classifying their Lord as an instance of any type whatever has often made men hesitate to affirm what seems to me so abundantly clear from the Gospel narrative. Is this fear justified ? I think not.

Let us consider again the impression of Christ given us in St. Mark. It can surely only grow upon us at all in virtue of our knowledge in our own experience of our capacity to share in that calmness and strength given to us too from our communion with God. But how different is our experience from His ! How seldom do we really rise above the pressure of the things of this world. How far above our present capacity seems that settled life of unruffled peace in communion with God. " The human animal," once remarked an Oxford tutor, " is a very efficient machine for physical exercise, but a most inefficient one for intellectual." Spiritual progress comes to most of us with no greater ease than intellectual. But with the Christ of the Gospels it is different. He seems all the time to be living at the level that we aspire to. What we long to be and do, He is and does naturally, as to the manner born. Almost by accident we stumble

upon the language of orthodoxy. He is naturally, or by nature, what we hope to become by grace.

A further difference exists between the greatest of mystics and Christ. Those who seem most to share with our Lord the faculty of being at home in the heavenly places do so in virtue of having renounced what previously was their " natural " life. But there is nothing in the Gospels to suggest that there was ever any " conversion " or " renunciation " in the life of Christ. Attempts have been made to argue that in His coming to the Baptist for baptism He acknowledged a consciousness of sin, but these arguments seem to me by no means convincing.[1] When, according to the Fourth Gospel, He asks : " Which of you convicteth me of sin ? "[2] that question is in keeping with the character portrayed by the Synoptists, and that freedom from sin is His by nature, not by acquisition.

It is not surprising, after all, that the Christian should have in his own experience glimpses of that life in the heavenly places which was Christ's. It is only a fulfilment of the Johannine promise that we shall be in Him as He is in the Father.[3] But we receive as a gift that share in the divine life which was His by nature.[4]

The Gospels, as we saw at the beginning, deal mainly with the period of our Lord's humiliation, in which His godhead was veiled. It was manifested, nevertheless, for those who had eyes to see it, in the fact that His mind was

[1] See below, chap. vii. p. 146.
[2] John viii. 46.
[3] John xvii. 20–23.
[4] Cp. Athanasius, *De Inc.* liv.

naturally at home in the heavenly places. That it was so is the impression clearly produced on us by the synoptic Gospels. Many interpretations have been suggested by the meaning of the phrases used to describe the impression He produced on the people of His own day. "They were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes." "They were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." [1] The simplest and most satisfactory explanation seems to be that, whether or no they understood what was involved, the impression was produced by their coming in contact with One who spoke from the point of view of God.

ii.

But He was God incarnate. He was Man. He was living on earth at a particular time in the history of this world. His mind, therefore, was occupied with the particular things which came to His notice. It was in and through His dealing with these objects of His earthly experience that He revealed the mind and character of God. This is a principle of interpretation which must be applied, I believe, throughout the Gospels. Its importance in the study of the Fourth Gospel I believe to be great, but the consideration of it in that sphere, and in certain

[1] Mk. i. 22, 27.

of its aspects, must be deferred to the chapter dealing with that Gospel and with the eschatological problem.[1] What I wish to do here is to explain and establish it as a principle of interpretation by reference to certain passages in the Synoptists.

There are many cases, of course, in which it has always been used without question. We have only to think of the widow's mite, of the young man who had great possessions, and of the scribe who asked which was the first commandment of all.[2] The estimate of the comparative value of the offerings of the rich men and the widow, the advice to the young man, the commendation of the scribe are all clearly the judgment of Christ on what was before Him at the time. Again, the suggestion that the parables of Christ may have their origin in reflection on things He had Himself seen on earth has often been made. The tale of the unjust steward may have recalled to His hearers events which had recently been the talk of their village, there may have been a reference to Archelaus in the parable of the talents, and in the parable of the sower He was, perhaps, picturing the results of His own sowing of the word.

Let us consider now the saying about the Broad and Narrow Ways.[3] This has sometimes been interpreted as though it were a divine decree limiting salvation to a small proportion

[1] See below, chaps. iv. v. and viii.
[2] Mk. x. 17–22 ; xii. 28–34, 41–44.
[3] Mt. vii. 13 ; Lk. xiii. 24.

of mankind. But it seems more probable that in it Christ is describing, more in sorrow than in anger, the activities of men as He found them. He knew what alone was worth living for. The majority of mankind did not know, and did not seem to wish to learn. They went heedlessly on their way, their whole attention given to the things of this world. He saw this, and spoke of what He saw.

There are a long series of sayings to and about the Scribes and Pharisees, all of which are similarly the fruits of His observation as He went about among them. He Himself is careful to point out that the truths He utters are open to every man to find for himself. The judgments of God are proclaimed as clearly as the coming weather.[1] They are to be read in the events of this life, in the "signs of the times." But men are blind. They are even unable to see the point of His parables, so much so that He finds teaching in parables a useful method in order to discriminate between those who have and those who have not an ear for His message.[2] What is lacking in them? Separated from God by sin, the power of reading aright the signs of the times is gone from them.[3] If only they dwelt in mind in the heavenly places so that they viewed the world with the eyes of God, they would not be in darkness as they are.[4] When He tells the scribe that above all it is necessary to love God with the whole of one's heart and

[1] Mt. xvi. 2–3; Lk. xii. 54–56. [2] Mk. iv. 11.
[3] Mt. xvi. 4; Lk. xi. 29. [4] Mt. vi. 19–24; Lk. xi. 34–36.

soul and mind and strength, the answer reveals His diagnosis of the spiritual condition of mankind, a diagnosis based on observation. He prescribed the only cure which could strike at the root of the disease and bring men to share with Him the knowledge of life in the heavenly places.

One more passage may be chosen to illustrate our point, that in which the Christ of the Synoptists speaks in words most resembling the language of the Fourth Gospel, and says : " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes : yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father : and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." [1] Assuming the authority of this saying as recorded, how are we to think of our Lord as having come on earth to the knowledge of His unique relationship to the Father ? I would suggest that here as elsewhere there is involved that empirical element in the knowledge of Christ of which we have been thinking. All His life He has known what it is to live in communion with the Father, to " know " the Father. Again and again He has been astonished to find how little this experience is shared by His fellow men and women, how little He can take it for granted that they will

[1] Mt. xi. 25–27 ; Lk. x. 21, 22.

understand Him when He speaks of what He knows. He has preached to the crowds, but they have not understood. He has chosen those who showed some glimmer of a capacity for learning, He has made them His disciples, and devoted Himself to their training. Even they are continually failing Him, and asking Him to explain. Even after the flash of inspired insight which won for Peter his blessing at Cæsarea Philippi, that disciple falls back almost at once into such lack of sympathy with his master's outlook that he becomes the mouthpiece of his master's tempter.[1] It is hardly too much to say that the uniqueness of His relationship to the Father was forced upon our Lord's attention at every stage of His life on earth.

It is the suggestion of this book that the Gospels are best explained on the Catholic doctrine of Christ as God made Man; on the hypothesis that during His life on earth His godhead was veiled in His manhood. He was conscious of standing in a relationship to the Father which was unique, and could only be explained, when the Church came to reflect upon it, by the doctrine of His divinity. But in the perfection of His humanity He was human in mind as well as in body. It is not, then, surprising that we should find in the Gospels evidence that this knowledge of His unique divine sonship reached His mind through the channels of His experience on earth. The last passage that we have discussed lends itself to this interpretation, and

[1] Mt. xvi. 13–23.

our belief in that interpretation is strengthened when we consider the questions raised by the so-called " eschatological problem " which is the subject of the next chapter.

iii.

Before we pass to these questions, there are three points raised by the present chapter which must be briefly considered. It is not the purpose of this book to discuss the theological implications of the Gospels so much as to point out what the Gospels themselves contain. But the two tasks cannot be completely divorced, and we must not ignore obvious difficulties that seem to be involved in our reading of the Gospels.

There is the question of the reality of our Lord's temptations. The strength of the appeal of a human Saviour has always lain in the fact of His being able to offer the sympathy of one who knows what it is to be tempted. But in speaking of Him as dwelling, while on earth, " in the heavenly places " do not we lift Him from among the number of those who are sorely beset by temptation to sin ? The same criticism is, of course, often brought against the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Christ is spoken of as able to be " touched with the feeling of our infirmities," having been " in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." [1] It is objected that one who was free from sin would also be free from temptation.

[1] Heb. iv. 15.

Now in both cases it seems to me that the objections are simply not true. No doubt our temptations are often due to our sinfulness or to our incomplete detachment from worldly claims and cares. But to maintain that temptation is impossible apart from these is the work of an abstract logic divorced from reflection on life as we know it in experience. A man may know it to be his duty to do something which he feels disinclined to do, to prepare a sermon, for instance. It does not require any sinfulness on his part for him fully to appreciate the fact that to sit in an arm-chair instead and read a novel would be a very pleasant thing to do. Temptation is an integral part of human life which no one can escape, however close may be his communion with God. It is not the experience of mystics that to walk with God in the heavenly places sets them free from it. St. Paul himself, for all his language about being dead to sin and walking in the spirit,[1] still knows the stress of temptation.[2] In this chapter we have called attention to the evidence in the Gospels that Christ on earth was dwelling "in the heavenly places." We shall find later that there is equal evidence for His being subject to temptation.[3]

The second point to be mentioned here is this. If our account of the consciousness of Christ according to the Gospels is correct, we would seem to have gained some understanding of the nature of the ignorance which, "for us

[1] *e.g.* Rom. viii.
[2] 1 Cor. ix. 27.
[3] See below, chap. vii. p. 160.

men and for our salvation," He experienced on earth. His knowledge was limited to that which could find a channel into His human mind. It is not easy, it is probably not possible, for us to draw the line which bounds this limitation. How greatly our conception of its area has been extended in recent years the next chapter will attempt to show. But it may here be worth while to point out that we do in ordinary practice make a distinction in ethics between ignorance which is and ignorance which is not culpable. From the days of Aristotle downwards attempts have been made to give a general account of where this line should be drawn; none, so far as I know, with success. I do not wish to maintain that this problem is the same as that before us, but they are sufficiently closely connected to suggest that no more in one case than in the other should inability to draw the line destroy our belief in the reality of the distinction.

It is now a commonplace to say that in matters of science and history our Lord shared the limitations of knowledge common to men of the time and place in which He came on earth. This would seem to be shown by His reference to Jonah and to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.[1] He has sometimes been accused of putting obstacles in the way of scientific research by lending the weight of His authority to mistaken theories of the nature and of the right treatment of diseases, and so diverting men from giving attention to fruitful

[1] See below, chap. iv. p. 50 *et seq.*

methods of medical research. This criticism seems to me to be far from acute, and to rest largely upon a defective analysis of what was meant by the "faith" which, according to Christ, was necessary for His works of healing.[1] Moreover, recent developments in the practice of mental healing seem in some ways to involve reversion to the position of our Lord. It was the custom in those days to ascribe to devils the causation of mental disturbances that could not otherwise be accounted for. Now avoiding the personification of the cause, it is a common practice in certain quarters to ascribe them to the influence of what is called "the unconscious." In both cases the environment of the conscious self is held to include elements of which it is, and of which it is not conscious, and in both cases the cure of the conscious self is effected by delivering it from the tyranny of the latter of these two, by convincing the patient that he had no longer anything to fear from that source.[2]

If in any way the example of Christ has led to the hindrance of medical progress, that seems to have been due to the ascription to Him of a wrong kind of superhuman knowledge, which on earth He neither used nor claimed to use, and if He is to be criticised for this He must be criticised for all the misinterpretations of the Gospels which men have ever made. And this, surely, is absurd.

[1] See below, chap. vi. pp. 133 ff.

[2] Cp. "The Self and the Unconscious" in the *Hibbert Journal*, for July 1922.

Lastly, there is one kind of ignorance which, if what has been written above be true, we should expect to find in our Lord, ignorance of what it is to be blind to the things of the Spirit as His hearers were blind. Of this, too, we find evidence in the Gospels to fulfil our expectations. When He comes across this we find a tone of wonder and surprise in His sayings which is absent elsewhere. He could and did talk with confidence and authority about the Father and the Father's will, but when the people of Capernaum were puzzled by His teaching He in turn "marvelled because of their unbelief,"[1] and when His disciples misunderstood His parabolic reference to the leaven of the Pharisees, or His teaching about "that which goeth into a man," He asks "Are ye so without understanding also?" or "How is it that ye do not perceive?"[2]

I have sometimes thought that here, perhaps, we find a clue to that deepest problem of Christology, the understanding of a kenosis dependent on an act of will. We know in our own experience what it is to have been deceived, and how the only way in which we can help to restore the character of him who has wronged us is to let him know that in spite of his deception we trust him again. But if we are to do this honestly, we must be honest in trusting him. We must not let ourselves think of him as likely to deceive us again, we must resolutely close our minds to that possibility, and really expect the best of him. It may be that he is still untrustworthy,

[1] Mk. vi. 6. [2] Mk. vii. 18; Mt. xvi. 11.

but this we do not allow ourselves to contemplate; of our own will we are in ignorance of it.

Now Christ, throughout His earthly ministry, seems never to have lost His faith in human nature. He was always being disappointed. He was never what we should call a "disappointed man." When only one of the ten lepers He had cleansed came back to thank Him, His question was: "Where are the nine?"[1] When His disciples misunderstood Him He, as we have seen, was astonished. This attitude of our Lord, this unquenchable faith in mankind, is, I believe, of the greatest importance in the right interpretation of the Gospels. Whether it involves a sublime form of ignorance dependent on an act of will and suggestive of a key to the mystery of the Incarnation is a question beyond the scope of this book. But of the part it played in the life of Christ on earth we shall have more to say.[2]

[1] Lk. xvii. 17.

[2] See below, chap. iv. p. 74.

CHAPTER IV

Eschatology

i.

Discussion of the nature of the authority of Christ's teaching as a guide for the Christian life has led us to the recognition of what may be called the empirical element in the mind of Christ, of the fact that the objects of His thought were presented to His mind in His experience at a particular time and place in the course of this world's history. We have seen reason to think that this apprehension of universals in particular instances is so integral an element in human experience that it must be involved in any doctrine of Incarnation that is true to itself, and that it should be taken as a principle of interpretation and applied to the Gospels throughout. In the light of this principle of interpretation we must now give our attention to the so-called "eschatological problem."

Strictly speaking, that problem should denote the problem of discovering what was our Lord's teaching about "the last things," but it is generally used with a wider reference, to denote a problem including this and more. In England

this use of the term is chiefly due to the influence of Albert Schweitzer. The way was prepared for his work by the recognition of the presence of what are called "apocalyptic" writings in the Old Testament, and by the growing interest in similar pre-Christian Jewish works outside the canon of Holy Scripture. These books are mainly characterised by the interest of their authors in "the last things," and point to a widespread belief in what has been described as "a good time coming"[1] for righteous Israelites when the Kingdom of God shall be set up in the day of the Lord. In many of them this is to be effected by the sudden intervention of a supernatural Messiah. The prophecy of these future events is based on accounts of their being revealed in visions, whence comes the name "apocalyptic" given to this literature as a whole.

In his book "Von Reimarus zu Wrede"[2] Schweitzer reviews a long series of attempts to rediscover a "historical Jesus," to give such an account of the human being whom Christians had deified as might account for the form in which he appears in the Gospels they had written about him. Finally he gives his own account, explaining Christ in the light of that apocalyptic literature as one whose mind was pre-occupied with "the last things," whose conceptions of them had been formed under the influence of the Jewish apocalyptic writers, and who had got

[1] By Dr. F. C. Burkitt in *Cambridge Biblical Essays* Macmillan, 1909.)

[2] Eng. tr. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* (London, 1910

it into his head that he was the expected Messiah as portrayed by them.

Schweitzer wrote in violent reaction against those who found in Christ a moral teacher who made no supernatural claims for Himself. In the violence of this reaction he was led to a one-sided treatment of the Gospels which critics were not slow in pointing out.[1] But, nevertheless, although there may be many ways in which his own particular theory in the form in which he states it is incapable of defence, he has made a contribution to the study of the Gospels such that that study can never be precisely the same as it was before he called attention to the apocalyptic background of Jewish thought in the time of Christ. Two examples will suffice to make this point clear. When Bishop Gore expressed his belief in a limitation of our Lord's knowledge consequent upon the Incarnation he drew a distinction between knowledge of such matters as history and science, where he held Christ to be limited to such knowledge as was open to one of His age and upbringing on earth, and knowledge of things divine, such as the truth concerning His own Person, where He had immediate knowledge as God.[2] Now in the light of the apocalyptic literature this distinction cannot be maintained. Even such a saying as "Before Abraham was, I am"[3] might have been uttered

[1] See *e.g.* Von Dobschutz, *The Eschatology of the Gospels* (London, 1910); and Emmet, *The Eschatological Question in the Gospels* (London, 1911).

[2] *e.g.* in *Lux Mundi*, Essay VIII (1889); *The Incarnation*, Lecture VI (1891).

[3] John viii. 58.

by one who, though only a man, had got it into his head that he was the expected Messiah, if among the expectations of that Messiah was the expectation of the appearing of a heavenly being hidden from before the foundation of the world.[1] And if the traditionalist is here called upon to revise his study of the Gospels, there is an equal necessity laid upon the liberal who has been accustomed to maintain that the historic Jesus never made on His own behalf any claims to supernatural office and dignity. That He thought of Himself as the expected Messiah come upon earth to establish the Kingdom of God seems to be established beyond possibility of doubt. Was He right in this belief, or did He share with His contemporaries a superstitious creed involving the chimaera of a Messiah? The Christian Church, by answering that He was right, was led by the logic of that answer to the Definition of Chalcedon. Schweitzer, by removing the "historic Jesus" who made no supernatural claims, has once again forced upon us the question: "What think ye of Christ?" The old dilemma—"Aut Deus aut homo non bonus"—takes on a new form. Was He Messiah, or a deluded fanatic?

In order to elicit the true nature of the authority of Christ's teaching we set in contrast two opposed views: the view of the reformer who spoke of Him as having no message for these days, and the view of such uncritical piety as demands in each saying of Christ an

[1] See *e.g.* Enoch xlviii. lxii.

ex cathedra pronouncement of divine omniscience.[1] We found both views untenable, and for the same reason in each case. They are based on a neglect of that apprehension of the universal in the particular which is an essential function of human nature, and thus arrive, on the one hand at a misunderstanding, on the other at a denial, of the empirical element in the thought of Christ as presented in the Gospels. We are now face to face with a similar contrast of opposed views with regard to the eschatological, or (as I would rather call it, using a term of wider significance) the supernatural element, in the teaching of our Lord. Here for the sake of clearness we must disentangle no less than four opposed views.

(1) There is the extreme "liberal" view, such as is maintained by Harnack, which denies that Christ had any interest in, or wished to teach, anything in the nature of metaphysical doctrine.

(2) There is the view of uncritical piety, which seems to believe that Christ's knowledge of things supernatural is due to His possession of divine omniscience in all its fullness, or to His power of drawing as it were on a store of memories of pre-incarnate existence.

(3) There is the view of such thinkers as Bishop Gore whose thought is based on the acceptance of a distinction between two spheres of knowledge, that in which earthly things are discovered by reason and that in which know-

[1] Above chap. ii. pp. 23, 24.

ledge of heavenly things is given by revelation. In the former sphere our Lord is held to have been limited, in the latter He is not.

(4) There is the view which, denying this distinction, maintains that Christ was dependent on the current teaching of His time, and was led by it into superstitious error.[1]

It is not possible here to state the arguments which render untenable that distinction of the materials presented to the human mind into two classes, knowledge of which is given respectively by reason and revelation working, so to speak, on parallel paths. It must suffice to say that such a distinction involves an impossible dualism and, in the sphere ascribed to reason, implies what can only be called pelagianism of the intellect. We must rather hold that reason and revelation co-operate over the whole field, wherever there is knowledge of truth. Man could discover nothing, did not God reveal it: God could reveal nothing, were not man able by his reason to apprehend it.[2]

[1] It should be pointed out that Schweitzer himself does not think of Christ as a teacher of superstitious error. For him "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts," and since human reason can come to no terms with the teaching of Christ, which it condemned as irrational, so much the worse for human reason! He is typical not of an extreme rationalism, but of a wave of anti-rationalism which makes any philosophical theology impossible. Consistently with this point of view he has turned from the study of theology to work for Christ in the Mission Field. Those who think mistaken his despair of rational Christianity must pay their tribute to the depth and sincerity of his religious conviction.

[2] For a fuller discussion, see C. C. J. Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man.* (London, 1911.)

We can no longer, then, draw a distinction within the sphere of the subject-matter presented to our Lord's mind, divorcing what was known and believed in His days about matters of history and science from what was known about God and His Messiah; we cannot say that for one class of material there was a way into His mind through ordinary human channels while for others there was not. We must honestly acknowledge that even such an idea as that of His own pre-existence might have come to Him from current teaching about the expected Messiah. Here, as in the case of His moral teaching, we must look for evidence of His divine insight not, as it were, in an account of celestial history and geography revealed by a visitor from above, but in the reaction of His mind to the teaching He happened to meet through His being born and growing up in Palestine at the beginning of our era.

Once again it must be emphasised that this is not to deny the divine nature of Christ; it is but to draw out the implications of belief in a real incarnation, in so far as that demands, in opposition to Apollinarianism, the belief that He was human in mind as well as in body. Apollinarianism was rejected by the Christian Church because it left no room for a real incarnation. We may put the orthodox argument in the form of a question: How could there be an incarnation without an empirical element in the knowledge of the Incarnate of things divine and human?

He was born the Child of Mary, and in the dawning of His infant consciousness learned "risu cognoscere matrem." Gradually He must have come to distinguish Himself from His mother and His foster-father, and to know Himself as a child. Then, as time goes on, we can trace the emergence of the faculty of conscience, when He learns, as all children have to learn, that personal responsibility to God must succeed to the stage when obedience to human parents is the whole duty of man. "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?"[1] So He came to know Himself as child and as man, to distinguish Himself from those around Him. Now, assuming that the traditional Christian belief be true, and that He was the incarnate second Person of the Trinity, He must have come in His human mind to the knowledge of Himself as standing in a relation to God different from that of other men. How was this possible? Here, surely, the eschatological school have done good service in calling our attention to the expectations of the Messiah current in Palestine at the time of His coming. We know how at the age of twelve He was found sitting at the feet of the rabbis in Jerusalem; we know how His mind was at home in the Old Testament and the traditions of His race. We should probably postulate as an element in the ethical self-consciousness of His earlier years a growing realisation that He occupied a unique position; but it was doubtless under the form of Messiahship that

[1] Lk. ii. 49.

there was presented to His mind in its fullness the thought of His unique relationship to the Father. He came to think of Himself not merely as child and man, but as Messiah. It was through the expectations of the Messiah that there was provided the normal channels into His human mind of the thought of Himself as more than ordinary human man.

He had before Him the Old Testament as developed and interpreted in later Jewish thought. The Old Testament, as expounded in His days in Palestine, provided the empirical element in His knowledge of God and of Himself as Messiah in relation to God. Precisely what this teaching was, how far, for example, the Enochian conception of the pre-existent Son of Man was current in Palestine as the accepted interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel, is a matter needing careful historical investigation, and perhaps the material for a final judgment is not in existence. One might probably say with safety that that interpretation was widespread, though not generally accepted. The student of the Gospels must sift the evidence as best he can, in order to understand the ideas with which Christ had to deal.

How did He deal with them? He thought of Himself as the expected Messiah, and the claim of the Christian Church is that He was not mistaken. It was not that He was a man who thought Himself Messiah, whereas there is no such thing; He was Messiah and knew it. The subsequent formulation of Christian doctrine is nothing more nor less than the justifica-

tion of the Messiah-idea, the working out of a view of the universe in which the Messiah is not a chimaera but a fact. Was Christ's own conception of His Messiahship such as helps to make that *weltanschauung* credible ? This is the question which the eschatological problem challenges us to consider.

ii.

When the eschatological problem is mentioned the words are apt to suggest the problem of determining what our Lord taught on two particular points, the date and manner of this world's coming to an end, and the nature of divine punishment. Did He believe that within the lifetime, if not of Himself, at any rate of some of His contemporaries, this world would come to a sudden and catastrophic end ? And did He believe in Hell ? These questions must be faced. But they are particular questions of eschatology lying within the wider problem which, as we have seen, includes the eschatological problem and may be called the " supernatural problem." We shall be wise if we first consider the wider question, leaving those difficult questions of detail in our Lord's eschatological thought to be viewed in the light of His general attitude towards the supernatural.

It is generally agreed that Christ was not a teacher of metaphysics. This is true in one sense of the words, but not in another, and the distinction between them is important, and too

often overlooked. It is true that He did not attempt to arrive at a view of the universe by such methods, and to state it in such terms, as are used by philosophers investigating the nature of reality. But it is not true to say that He had no views on, and no interest in, the matters which form the subject of metaphysical inquiry; that He had no general view of the universe, no objective creed. If He shared with the Jews a view of the universe which may be called "dramatic" as contrasted with the "metaphysical" view of the Greeks, nevertheless it was a view of the universe. Such a position can only be called non-metaphysical if it be clearly recognised that by that is meant that the metaphysical assumptions which it involves have not been thought out in metaphysical terms. Involve them it must. It is impossible to hold any view of the universe which has not definite metaphysical implications.

An illustration may help to make this clear. A Christian child is normally brought up to believe in his heavenly Father who has made him and loves him, calls him to be good, has redeemed him in Christ, and prepared a happy home for him in Heaven. By and by, as the child grows up, he finds that this dramatic presentation of his environment is not the only one. His early views of creation are tested by acquaintance with the natural sciences; his belief in goodness is challenged by the apparent indifference of the natural order to moral issues; his hopes of Heaven are clouded by the negative

results of attempts to demonstrate the certainty of personal immortality. The comparative study of religions teaches him that the way in which he has been accustomed to think of God and man and the relations between them is not the only one. Is it the true one? It is a dramatic presentation, a statement of the nature of the universe in terms of persons, persons with definite characteristics, such as the love of God and sinfulness of men. There is only one way in which it can be established as the true presentation. Only if he can come to see that the world as discovered by rational thought in science and philosophy reveals a universe in which are recognisable the familiar features of his creed, can he reach the goal of his intellectual quest.

Like the Christian child the Christian Church could not long avoid facing the metaphysical issues involved in its belief. Had Christ been no more than the moral teacher of certain "liberal" theories, His doctrine of the Fatherhood of God must sooner or later have been tried at the bar of reason. Is the universe such that we can believe in the existence of such a Being as the God spoken of by Jesus of Nazareth?

When, therefore, we say that Christ did not teach metaphysics we do not mean that He never committed Himself on points of metaphysical importance, such as the existence of God. We merely mean that He used the natural medium of religion, that He thought in dramatic as contrasted with philosophical terms, in terms not of reality and appearance, of finite and

infinite, of one and many, or of substance and hypostasis; but of maker and made, of ruler and ruled, of father and child. Everything which He taught in these latter terms involved positions which could be, and sooner or later must be, stated in the former. But the facing of those questions, and the working out of such statements, was left for others.

Here there appears one definite and valuable result of the study of the eschatological problem for our understanding of Christian origins. In reaction from the view that the developed creeds of the Church were the direct expression of the thought of the writers of the New Testament there came a tendency to deny to the earliest Christians any definite creed at all, and an attempt to postulate a so-called "age of experience" preceding any age of faith. This was due to the realisation that for a creed there is required a view of the universe to be the framework into which is fitted certain particular convictions, together with the fact that the framework of the Nicene Creed was seen to have been impossible as the setting of the Apostolic faith or the teaching of Jesus Christ. But now that the Gospels are read in the light of contemporary Jewish thought we find a dramatic, "eschatological" view of the universe amply sufficient to provide an objective framework for a creed.

In this framework time and space are taken for granted, and the universe is explained as the stage whereon is being enacted the divine

drama. The starry heavens and the earth beneath are the creation of God, who is their governor. Man has been created for the service of God, and the Jews have been chosen to be His own people. At present they are far from the glory which is their destiny. But the Day of the Lord will come when the Messiah shall appear to set up the Kingdom of God and to fulfil the hopes of His people.

Such, in barest outline, was the form in which the universe was presented to the mind of our Lord as He grew up at Nazareth. When we attempt to fill out the details of the picture difficulties arise from want of sufficient clear evidence. It is certain that there were two main lines of Messianic expectation. There was the "prophetic" view, in which Messiah would be a second David, born of the Davidic line, and destined to restore the glories of his ancestor's reign. All this would take place in the ordinary course of history. Contrasted with this was the "apocalyptic" view, in which the Messiah was to be a divine Being revealed from Heaven and appearing in the skies to put an end to this world's history, catch up the elect to reign with Him in His kingdom in a new Heaven and a new earth, and consign this earth with its remaining inhabitants to everlasting flames. It would be extremely valuable to know to what extent, and in what circles, these different views prevailed, and whether more or less inconsistent combinations of them were characteristic of popular religious thought. Above

all, it would be helpful to know how the Old Testament was ordinarily expounded in the synagogues up and down Palestine. What, for example, were the ideas called up in the mind of the pious Jew as he heard read the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel? The original author of that book had doubtless meant by the title "Son of Man" to indicate the people of Israel. But in a portion of the book of Enoch which Dr. Charles dates from between 94 and 64 B.C. the title is taken over to be the title of the personal divine Messiah who, having been hidden from before the foundation of the world, is to be revealed in judgment in the Day of the Lord.[1] Had such conceptions as are found here in Enoch gained so wide an acceptance as the standard exegesis of the passage in Daniel that the phrase "Son of Man" naturally suggested a personal divine Messiah? When our Lord spoke of Himself as "Son of Man" did that involve a claim to Messianic dignity which would have been understood as such by the people to whom He spoke? On this, and on many similar points, there does not seem to be conclusive evidence. Here, as so often, we have to be guided as far as possible by what evidence there is, and then to try to arrive at a conclusion which will enable us to give a reasonable explanation of the course of events as contained in the Gospel story.

[1] See chaps. xlviii. and lxii. (Charles, *Pseudepigrapha of the O.T.*, Oxford, 1913.)

iii.

In the growth of His human mind our Lord came to the knowledge of His Messiahship. It seems probable that in the Gospel narrative the account of His Baptism marks the critical moment at which this conviction became a certainty. In the earliest account, that of St. Mark, on which the other two are based, the hearing of the voice and the vision of the dove are clearly recorded as experiences, not of the whole company but of Christ Himself. The call to special Sonship and the special anointing by the Spirit meant to Him a call to Messiahship, and He went away into the wilderness to ponder over this certain conviction of His office in silent communion with His Father. There He put from Him the temptations to adopt conceptions of Messiahship such as were common among His contemporaries but were not in accordance with the divine will. He was not to use the powers which He believed were at His disposal[1] to live in regal security from the toils and privations of ordinary men; He was not to be the warrior-prince overcoming the kingdoms of this earth by military force; He was not to appear in the skies and be hailed by the faithful assembled before the Temple, the expected place of Messiah's appearing among those who looked for Him to come in that wise. These He put from Him as evil suggestions, criticising from the point of view of God the ideas presented through normal channels to His

[1] See below, chap. vi. pp. 133, 139.

human mind. What positive conception of Messiahship He adopted in their place must be gathered from His subsequent words and deeds.

It is clearly impossible here to give any full account of this.[1] We must content ourselves with noting two points of central importance, and touching on one or two outstanding matters of detail.

The first main point to notice is the place in our Lord's thought occupied by what is most conveniently called the Supernatural. Belief in God as "Supreme and luminously self-evident"[2]; belief in God's will as the ultimately controlling power in all existence; these beliefs translated into action in a life of which prayer and faith are the keynotes: take this away, and whatever is left is a caricature of the historic Christ. His first message was to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom of God.[3] His disciples were called to understand "the mysteries of the kingdom of God."[4] They were to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,"[5] laying up their treasures not on earth but in heaven.[6] He spent long periods in prayer, and taught the disciples to pray,[7] and told them that with faith as a grain of mustard seed they should remove mountains.[8]

[1] Some of the gaps will be filled up in chaps. v. and vii.

[2] This phrase is, of course, adapted from J. H. Newman's description of his own convictions.

[3] Mk. i. 14.

[4] Mk. iv. 11.

[5] Mt. vi. 33; Lk. xii. 31.

[6] Mt. vi. 19; cp. Lk. xii. 33.

[7] Lk. vi. 12; xi. 1–4.

[8] Mk. xi. 22–23; Mt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21; Lk. xvii. 6; and see below, chap. vi. pp. 133 ff, 139.

He had come to proclaim the Kingdom of God in accordance with God's will. He thought of Himself as the Messiah, come to establish that Kingdom. What claim did that involve to any position more than human ?

The title by which He most frequently referred to Himself was " The Son of Man." We have seen that in the book of Enoch this was the title of a pre-existent supernatural Messiah who was to appear in judgment. Apart from a single Lucan interpretation of a saying in St. Mark where probably no such idea was intended,[1] there is no passage in the synoptic Gospels where our Lord claims pre-existence ; there are many in which He claims to be the Son of Man who shall appear in judgment. There are also passages which seem to show that among the conceptions which make up the " empirical element " in His thought of Himself as Messiah a very important place must be assigned to the description of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah liii.[2] In that chapter of Isaiah the Servant of Jehovah is pictured as passing through suffering and death on behalf of God's people to a triumph and glory in which " he shall see the travail of his soul and be justified." It has been pointed out that if Christ combined with this passage the account of the coming into His glory of the Son of Man in Daniel vii. there

[1] Mk. i. 38 ; Lk. iv. 43.

[2] On this point see A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London, 1926), p. 255, and Mr. F. D. V. Narborough's Essay in *Essays on The Trinity and the Incarnation* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1928).

would have been presented to His human mind all the elements which we find in His prophecies of His own death and resurrection in the Gospels.

He thought of Himself, then, as the Messiah who was at present doing the work of the Servant of Jehovah, and was to be glorified with the promised glory of the Son of Man. So on earth He had authority, as Son of Man, to forgive sins.[1] He accepted St. Peter's confession that the Twelve believed Him to be the Christ,[2] and, according to the First Gospel, acknowledged that belief to be the fruit of divine inspiration.[3] He spoke of the blessings promised to those who should give themselves to His service.[4] He spoke of Himself as knowing the Father as no other man did, and of His work as of greater significance than the preaching of Jonah or the wisdom of Solomon.[5] He prophesied of His suffering, death, and resurrection,[6] and of His return in glory to judgment.[7] To these sayings may be added the manner of His final entry into Jerusalem, as portrayed in the First and Third Gospels, the cleansing of the Temple, the parable of the wicked husbandmen, and the saying : " The Son of man goeth as it is written of him."

His thought of His passion and mission, then, was throughout supernatural in the sense that He thought of Himself as the Messiah who had

[1] Mk. ii. 10, and see below, chap. v. [2] Mk. viii. 29, 30.
[3] Mt. xvi. 17. [4] Mk. ix. 39–41 ; x. 29.
[5] Mt. xi. 27 ; Lk. x. 22 ; Mt. xii. 41, 42 ; Lk. xi. 31, 32.
[6] Mk. viii. 31, 38 ; ix. 31 ; x. 32–34 ; xiv. 28, 62 ; Mt. x. 32 ; Lk. xii. 8.
[7] Mk. xiv. 62 ; Mt. xxvi. 64 ; Lk. xxii. 69.

come sent by God[1] to do the work of God as laid down in the Scriptures. Whether or no He thought of Himself as a pre-existent Being appearing on earth makes very little difference.[2] The claim of the Christian Church is that His own thought of Himself involves, if it be true, such a supernatural office as justifies the beliefs about Him stated in the Christian creeds, and that if these elements in His thought are set on one side, whatever remains is not the historic Jesus. The thoughts, words, and deeds of that historic Figure are natural in the incarnate Saviour of the Christian faith; can this be said of them otherwise?

The second main point to be noted is the primacy of ethics in the religious outlook of Christ. It is one of the tragedies of Gospel study that attempts have been made to set up a contrast between Christ the moral teacher and Christ the preacher of supernatural religion, and to demand of the student that he should choose between them in his search for the historic Jesus. Only the acknowledgment that the one Christ was both can do justice to the Gospels. If the liberal must recognise in Him one whose claims pass beyond those of ordinary men, the eschatologist also must cease to see in His ethical teaching a mere corollary of His religious interests.[3] The truth would seem, indeed, to be

[1] See Mk. ix. 37; Mt. x. 40; Lk. ix. 48.

[2] On this see below, chap. viii.

[3] On this latter point see Emmet, *The Eschatological Question in the Gospels*.

the other way round. What was characteristic of the eschatological teaching of Christ was that its whole tenor was determined by His ethics. If we wish to enter in and understand His conception of Messiahship and the Kingdom of God this key, and this key only, will fit the lock.

We have spoken of Christ as looking out upon the world with the eyes of one who dwelt in continuous unbroken communion with God "in the heavenly places." He knew the divine nature to be primarily righteous love. The Baptist's message, striking the old prophetic note of insistence on moral values for the service of Jehovah, struck an answering chord in His mind, and He hastened to join the followers of the one true prophet among many rival preachers of what the Kingdom of God should be. In so doing He came in His human mind to the knowledge of His own vocation, and passed into the wilderness to prepare for His Messiahship. He came forth to preach the advent of the Kingdom of God, and to summon men to be citizens of that Kingdom.

It has often been pointed out that the root idea of the word "kingdom" in Jewish thought is not a tract of territory or anything of the kind, but the sway, the dominance of the King.[1] For our Lord, therefore, wherever righteous love is taken as the rule of life, whether it be in the hearts and lives of individual men, or in the codified principles of their association in societies, there is the Kingdom of God. So it can be said

[1] Cp. *e.g.* A. E. J. Rawlinson, "St. Mark" (*Westminster Commentary*, London, 1925), p. liii.

to be present where one man gives himself in devoted service to God, while, nevertheless, at the same time it can be said to need to be set up because the organisation of human society is based on principles alien to it, and only when, in the words of St. Paul, the last enemy shall have been destroyed and God be all in all,[1] will it be fully come. This is true to-day. It was true in our Lord's day. If we think of Him as having seen and proclaimed this truth our thought can assimilate and resolve the apparent contradictions between His various sayings about the Kingdom. It can be present in His casting out of demons[2] and within (or among) men[3]; it can be growing as a seed secretly[4] and yet be expected to come in the future in human society[5] and at the end of the world.[6] In each and all of its manifestations it is characterised by being the dominance in life of the will of God, and the way to become its citizens is by repentance, the acceptance of forgiveness, and the devotion of self to a life based on righteous love as its principle.

And if our Lord's knowledge of the righteous love of God is the ground of His conception of the Kingdom of God, the same knowledge underlies His thought of His own Messiahship. He is to summon men to righteousness, and this means the calling on them to repent and seek forgiveness

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. [2] Mt. xii. 28; Lk. xi. 20.
[3] Lk. xvii. 21.
[4] Mk. iv. 26–32; Mt. xiii. 31–33; Lk. xiii. 18–21.
[5] Mk. ix. 1; Mt. x. 23.
[6] Mt. viii. 11, 12; Lk. xiii. 28, 29; Lk. xxii. 69.

for their sins. But He is to do more than to call them; He is to make possible their forgiveness when they respond, as the Servant of Jehovah He is "to justify many and bear their iniquities."[1] So He speaks of Himself as come in His Messiahship to call sinners,[2] to seek and save the lost,[3] and to give His life a ransom for many.[4]

Here, if anywhere, we find clear evidence of "originality" in the teaching of Jesus. It springs from the thought of God as righteous love, and finds its supreme expression in the passage wherein our Lord contrasts the world's idea of kingship with the true conception as revealed to the world in that Son of Man who is to be the judge of those admitted to the Kingdom of God: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[5]

iv.

A word or two must be said about what is implied in this determination of eschatological

[1] Isa. liii. 11. [2] Mk. ii. 17. [3] Lk. xix. 10.
[4] Mk. x. 45; see below, chap. v.
[5] Mk. x. 42–45; cp. Mt. xx. 25–28; Lk. xxii. 25–27.

teaching by moral conceptions. If our reading of the Gospels be right, the two elements in the teaching of Christ, eschatological and moral, are warp and woof of a seamless robe, and cannot be torn apart without destroying the whole. It is clear from our earlier discussion that this will involve important metaphysical consequences. Our Lord claims that as the expression of righteous love He is the true Messiah of God, who will come again in glory to judge mankind. Here in the dramatic form of religious thought He implies that the universe is such that its God is personal, righteous, and loving. The Christian Church took up the challenge and by formulating the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement attempted to give philosophical form to what was involved in accepting Christ at His own valuation of Himself.

At the beginning of this chapter we mentioned two questions of detail in our Lord's eschatological teaching, but postponed their discussion. These were, the language in which He seems to expect the end of the world to come in the lifetime of His contemporaries, and His belief about rewards and punishments, Heaven and Hell.

The passages which most definitely suggest an immediate end of the world are four. In St. Mark ix. 1 Christ says: "Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God come with power." In xiii. 30 He says: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be

accomplished." These sayings, and the reply to the High Priest: "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven," occur in all three synoptic Gospels.[1] The fourth passage is Matthaean alone, and is found in the discourse with which Christ sends out the Twelve on a mission of preaching: "Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."[2] The interpretation of other passages in accordance with this expectation, for example the prophecies in St. Luke xvii. 20-37, and such Parables as the Fig Tree and the Tares,[3] depend on these sayings being taken as determining their significance.

This question has been discussed almost *ad nauseam*, and it is not unfair to say that the opinion of Schweitzer, for whom these sayings, literally interpreted, give the kernel of Christ's message, has not met with general acceptance among scholars. They remain as difficult points of exegesis, to be viewed in the light of the general account of our Lord's teaching which we have given. Viewing them in this way we may suggest three possible lines of interpretation, but must not be dismayed if in the end we have to admit that there are passages in the Gospels whose meaning cannot be satisfactorily determined.

First, we may agree to take them in their literal sense, but to maintain that they are

[1] Cp. Mt. xvi. 28; xxiv. 34; xxvi. 64. Lk. xxi. 32; ix. 27; xxii. 69. [2] Mt. x. 23. [3] Lk. xiii. 6–9; Mt. xiii. 24–43.

matters of detail and comparatively unimportant. Christ's real message is to be found in His certainty of the existence of God who is righteous love, and of His own vocation, as representing that God, to return in glory to judgment. If He thought that this return was imminent, that is no more important than His believing that Jonah had been in the whale's belly. It was a matter of historical detail, on which He shared the beliefs of those around Him, and part of that empirical element in His thought which belonged to the days of His humiliation. It is significant that it was precisely on this point that in one passage He definitely disclaims knowledge: "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."[1]

Secondly, we may hold that the words of Christ have come down to us in a form which owes its colouring to misunderstanding of His meaning by His followers. To them the coming of the Kingdom of God meant the end of the world and the appearance of the Messiah on the clouds of glory. To Him it did not. If He said: "The kingdom of God is at hand," they took Him to mean the end of the world. Conversely, He used the traditional imagery, as in speaking to the High Priest, to symbolise ideas other than those literally expressed by the language.

[1] Mk. xiii. 32; Mt. xxiv. 36. On the general question of the irrelevance of such points see the essay on Eschatology in Edwyn Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*. (London, 1921.)

A third possible interpretation might tentatively be suggested, arising out of our earlier discussion of what we ventured to call "divine ignorance."[1] We spoke of Christ never losing His faith in human nature, of always being disappointed, but never what we should call "a disappointed man." Is it not possible that in these eschatological sayings we see the utter sincerity of that unfailing expectation that man will respond to God's call? When He sent out the Twelve to preach, when He spoke of His death and resurrection, and right up to the last when He stood before the High Priest, He could not understand such blindness on the part of mankind to what was to Him so "luminously self-evident"; He would not admit, until it had been proved beyond the shadow of doubt, that men would continue deaf to the call of God. He would not give them up. It rested with them to make possible or impossible God's immediate bringing in of the Kingdom of God,[2] and He assumed that they would rise to their opportunity.

The problem of Rewards and Punishments, Heaven and Hell, is part of a larger question, which demands a chapter to itself.

[1] See above, chap. iii. p. 46.

[2] See below, chap. v. p. 106; chap. vi. p. 139; chap. vii. p. 166.

CHAPTER V

Rewards and Punishments

i.

We have agreed that a critical study of the Gospels reveals the figure of Jesus Christ as that of One who was convinced that He was the Messiah come on earth to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, and that for Him Messiahship and the Kingdom were moral conceptions through and through. It was as representing righteousness and love, and as inaugurating a kingdom whose laws were righteousness and love, that He made His appeal. The particular form in which His message was cast was that of the Jewish apocalyptic outlook of His time, a form in which certain metaphysical implications are involved. Those implications may be summarised in the following quotation from a modern writer: "Behind and immanent in the evolutionary process —cosmic, organic and social alike—not in the sense of a First Cause in the causal series, but in the sense of a transcendent *fons et origo* of all phenomena, is an original and unique personal Being, who established as the final aim and essential purpose of this whole process the development of ethical and spiritual personalities,

and the bringing of them into living and conscious communion and oneness with Himself. This is the new theists' conception of God, and of His relation to the evolutionary process."[1] From this point of view we have seen that certain details of the particular dramatic form in which His message was presented are unimportant; given the hypothesis of the coming of a Messiah at a particular time and place in this world's history they were "inseparable accidents" of the proclamation of that message at all.

But there are other elements in the teaching of Jesus Christ which cannot be thus lightly dismissed, for they concern directly the character of God, whether He be thought of in the metaphysical language of philosophy or in the dramatic language of religion. These are the passages in which He speaks of God as rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, and of His own death as a "ransom." Traditional Christian theology has taken over these passages as they stand, and, with the aid of St. Paul, has built upon them the doctrine of the Atonement in all its various forms. It is clear at once that if He was mistaken in this conception of God, the matter is much more serious than if He shared the human ignorance of the "times and seasons" of the future history of the world.

The passages of the former kind are many in

[1] D. S. Robinson: *The God of the Liberal Christian* (N.Y., Appleton, 1926), p. 145. I know of no better *single* book in which the grounds for this position are set forth than W. R. Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God* (Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 1921).

number. There are parables, such as those of the Talents, the Wedding Feast, and the Wicked Husbandmen,[1] and sayings such as those concerning the offending hand or foot or eye, the broad and narrow ways, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha.[2] The crucial passage of the latter kind is that in which our Lord sums up His account of Himself in the words "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[3]

It may be said at once that if the Gospels are approached purely along the lines of objective literary criticism it is impossible to eliminate these elements in the teaching of Jesus Christ as later interpolations which do not express His own mind. Nevertheless, attempts to deal with them in this way have been made, notably by Dean Rashdall in his Bampton Lectures on "The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology"[4] and by Miss Dougall and Dr. Emmet in "The Lord of Thought."[5] But in both cases one cannot avoid the conclusion that the attempt would never have been made had it not been for the views on God, sin, and atonement held by those authors, views which were incompatible with the *prima facie* meaning of the Gospel teaching. This is

[1] Mt. xxv. 14; Lk. xix. 11; Mt. xxii. 1; Lk. xiv. 15; Mk. xii. 1; Mt. xxi. 33; Lk. xx. 9.

[2] Mk. ix. 43; Mt. v. 29; xviii. 8; Mt. vii. 13; Lk. xiii. 23; Mk. iii. 28; Mt. xii. 31; Lk. xii. 10; Mt. xi. 23.

[3] Mk. x. 45; Mt. xx. 28.

[4] (London, 1919), pp. 49–56.

[5] London, 1922.

explicitly stated by Dr. Emmet in the following words: "Christ, then, brought to the world for the first time in its clearness the good news of the Fatherhood of God. The question before us is whether with this He combined other conceptions of God. Did He sometimes present Him as the omnipotent King who punishes and avenges, who in the last resort falls back from the attractive compulsion of love to the threatening force of a destructive judgment? Those who see no inconsistency between the two sides will answer without hesitation; the Gospels, they urge, no less than the Apocalypse, point to the wrath of the Lamb. But those who feel that the attempt to combine the two is 'to walk with unequal legs,' must, as already pointed out, choose between two alternatives. Either Jesus was not clear-sighted enough to see the contradiction, but retained the inherited and contemporary ideas side by side with His own new vision; or the apparent contradiction does not belong to the original teaching, but is an accretion which has crept in during some of those various stages through which Christ's words passed before they reached their present form." [1]

Here, then, is another of those points in which Gospel criticism cannot be divorced from philosophical theology, and it is in the latter sphere that the question at issue must primarily be discussed.

Without doubt the theology which repudiates

[1] *The Lord of Thought*, p. 235.

both divine punishment and sacrificial atonement reflects a very widespread and popular tendency in present-day thought. In many circles it is accepted as a commonplace that punishment, in the true sense of the term, whether of children or of criminals, is a discredited relic from ages of darkness. The acceptance of this view produces in theological circles an exclusive devotion to "Abelardian" or "moral influence" theories of atonement, in which the whole story of the Cross is comprised in the statement that it is an exhibition of the love of God calculated to win the sinner to repentance. It will be well to examine these two positions in order.

ii.

The evil wrought by harsh and cruel punishment, whether by parents or states, can hardly be exaggerated; and any growth in the sympathetic understanding and humane treatment of both children and criminals is one of the most welcome signs of the permeation of human life by Christian principles. But there is room for a more profound theoretical analysis of what underlies this advance in practice than is commonly made. It is often assumed that there are three theories of punishment, vindictive or retributory, deterrent, and reformatory, and that the explanation of the advance is the discovery that it is only in the last of these, the reformatory, that there is any truth. But there are

two difficulties here. In the first place, we must ask whether reformatory activity, as such, can truly be called punishment at all. Am I " punished " by a law which prevents me from obtaining any alcoholic refreshment ? When we reflect upon it we see that we only use the words " reformatory punishment " to describe the situation where the control of a man's life is taken out of his own hands and he is compelled to take a course of treatment which is believed to be for his own good. It is this element of restraint which justifies the use of the term " punishment," and what justifies the application of this restraint ? Surely the crime in consequence of which the powers that be initiate the course of reformatory treatment. Unless, therefore, we are to welcome a widespread regimentation of human life, which denies and tramples upon the freedom of the individual,[1] we cannot divest our reformatory punishment of a backward-looking or " retributory " element, in virtue of which the reformatory treatment is prescribed. The second difficulty, which is a practical one, arises out of this theoretical point. Apart from some attempt to proportion the reformatory treatment to the gravity of the case as revealed in the crime, how shall we avoid going to the most hideous lengths of injustice and interference with human freedom in our

[1] This seems to be the ideal of certain " behaviourists," who neither believe in nor care for human freedom. Such writers seldom seem to face the question of the need for a race of supermen to do the regimenting ; they tacitly assume that they will do it themselves.

efforts to reform? In spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it, the principle of making "the punishment fit the crime" remains the sole guarantee to the criminal that his rights as a man will be respected. He will be in a sad way if such sayings as "Let him alone, he has been sufficiently punished," fade out of human speech. Hence, again, so long as punishment is retained at all, the backward-looking or "retributory" element is essential.

It would seem to be a necessity of clear thinking, therefore, to look on reformation not as an element in, or a variety of, punishment, but something other than punishment. The aim of reformation is one which, whenever possible, should always be combined with the aim to punish; that mode of punishment should always be adopted which will tend towards reformation. In this combined activity, punishment is the element which looks backward to the crime in consequence of which the whole activity is undertaken. The question then arises whether this whole backward-looking element is not an evil to be discarded. The practical difficulty here has already been indicated: it is the danger of a widespread regimentation of inoffensive human beings on the ground that they need reforming. In the face of this danger it is worth while asking whether we cannot give an account of punishment which shall justify us in retaining it in human society as a guarantee of human liberty.

The first point to be noticed is that punishment is a relation which can never properly

obtain between two individuals who are, so to speak, on the same level. This fact is reflected in the common saying that John Doe has no right "to take the law into his own hands" against Richard Roe. It is a relation which can only rightly exist *between a community and a member of itself.* The importance of this principle can hardly be over-emphasised. It is for want of a clear grasp of it, for instance, that punishment has been thought to be adequately described as the sublimation of a primitive instinct of private revenge. But whatever confusion between revenge and punishment may have actually occurred in human history, it is essential to clear thought to distinguish between the two. The one is a relation between John Doe and Richard Roe, the other a relation between the community to which both belong and one or both of them. One man can only be in a position to inflict punishment upon another if he is the rightful representative of the community to which both belong.

It follows from this that the "otherness" of the two parties in punishment, of the punisher and the punished, is a relative term. The punished is a member of the punisher, and all punishment is in a sense self-punishment. In what sense? This question raises the age-long problem of the relation between society and the individual. It must suffice here to call attention to one or two points in this complicated and difficult relationship. On the one hand it is clear that no individual exists purely as an

individual. He comes into existence as a member of society, and throughout his life he exists and functions only as a member of society, or rather, of many societies: of family, school, college, country, church, mankind. These all contribute to the making of what he is as an individual; he is, as it were, a focal point in which the common life of the group expresses itself. On the other hand, there is a sense in which he stands out as an individual over against the community, there is a certain relative "otherness." He can express his will independently of the common will; he has to make his own contribution to the common life; and according to the quality of that contribution the life of the whole will be raised or lowered. There seems to be what we may call "a relation of mutual interaction" between the two—a convenient phrase to describe, though it does not explain, this well-known and difficult problem.

Now it is of primary importance to the well-being of the individual himself that the life of the society to which he belongs should be good; for otherwise his whole personal life will be tainted at the source. And if he himself do what is evil, the one vitally important thing is that his evil act should not infect the tone of the life of the society. How can this be avoided, seeing that he only lives as a member of the society's life? How can his act be divested of its representative character as an act of the society functioning through him? Surely only if the society repudiate and disown the evil act

by a clear expression to all and sundry of its disapproval.

Here, then, in the thought of it as an expression of disapproval by which a society disowns what would otherwise have been its own act we seem to have the essential element of punishment. Given the problem of maintaining the goodness of the society as a whole while allowing for a relative independence and freedom on the part of its members, it is hard to see how this activity can ever be dispensed with. The society must neither connive at the evil acts of its members, thus losing its own goodness, nor antecedently shackle their freedom of self-expression. Proposals to eliminate punishment from human societies, when thoroughly analysed, are found logically to involve one or other of these evils, and to be based on an insufficient sense of the importance either of moral values or of individual freedom. It remains, therefore, for the community openly to express its disapproval of the evil act when it has been committed.

This definition of punishment as the expression by a community of its disapproval of the evil acts of its members may seem, at first sight, the offer of a pale and unsubstantial ghost to substitute for a vision of racks and thumbscrews, dungeons and gallows, which that word calls to mind. But if we carefully distinguish between the essential and the accidental, and remember that physical pain is not the only pain, two things become clear. The first is that there is a real ground for the connection we

naturally think of as existing between punishment and pain. It can never be pleasant to be placarded as the object of social disapproval and to have this fact brought home to oneself; and sometimes one wonders whether an old-fashioned beating may not be more merciful than the exquisite mental torture provided by the substitutes suggested in certain educational text-books of to-day. But, secondly, even if the infliction of pain of some sort is inseparable from punishment there is no excuse for the grim association of punishment with instruments of torture, either physical or mental. Without losing our grip on the necessity of the essential aim of punishment, we may dissociate it from the unfortunate modes through which, in history, it has too often found expression. In discovering the minimum pain with which in each case the disapproval can be effectively expressed, and in the attempt to combine this activity of punishment with reformatory assistance to the criminal, there is plenty of work to be done by Christians whether as parents, teachers or judges. And on these lines true advance may be made.

We may seem to have been following a somewhat abstract discussion, and of the many difficulties left untouched I am well aware. It may help to show that the principles I have attempted to set forth are not mere *a priori* speculation, if we reflect that they are, as a matter of fact, the principles on which our social life is actually lived. Two illustrations must suffice. If a member of a football team

is deliberately guilty of " dirty " play, it is the team which is held responsible. The good name of the team depends on its disowning the act of the individual player. Again, the safety of any one of us when travelling or residing abroad rests on the fact that the Government of the land in which we are will be held responsible by our own Government for any attacks made upon us by its citizens. The principle of collective responsibility, guarded against the misuse of individual liberty by collective acts of disapproval and repudiation, is the corner-stone not only of the cleanliness of sport and the peace of the world, but of the whole moral stability of mankind.

iii.

It is not surprising that in reaction from crude and immoral " substitutionary " theories of the Atonement the Abelardian view enjoys to-day a widespread popularity. The teaching of this view is that the Cross is an appeal directed to the heart of the sinner. What is wrong, what needs to be put right, is the sinner's soul. No external force can affect this, still less any external transaction carried out two thousand years ago between Christ and the Father. There must be an inward " moving " of his heart, a drawing by the bands of love. This comes when he contemplates the love of God as revealed in Christ. Thus he is moved to repentance. When truly repentant he is changed and cured and forgiven. There is nothing more to be done.

This theory, therefore, has no need of any belief in divine punishment, and no place for any objective sacrificial element in atonement. God forgives immediately upon repentance, there is no need for the intervention of any third party, or of any transaction directed towards appeasing wrath or averting punishment. We must cease to think of the Incarnation and of the Cross as anything more than a showing forth of the Love of God in order to appeal to the heart of the sinner.

The immediate result of adopting the Abelardian view is a great simplification of the doctrine of the Atonement. From the time of St. Paul, if not from earlier, the Christian Church has commonly been accustomed to hold that in virtue of something accomplished by Christ on the Cross men stand in a relationship to God other than that in which, apart from that accomplishment, they would stand; and that this accomplishment and altered relationship are objective facts which are there whether a man repents or not. The problem which has been debated down the ages, and which has given rise to the various theories of atonement, is the problem of just what is the nature of that accomplishment and consequently of the change in the relationship. The Church has never officially endorsed any one of these theories: it has been customary to teach "something accomplished, something done," in virtue of which the Church proclaims God's free pardon to repentant sinners, and to leave the widest freedom of interpretation

as to the nature of the "something." But if the Abelardian view be accepted the whole problem falls to the ground. There was, and is, no "something."

There is a great attractiveness in this simplicity, and a contribution of permanent value in the Abelardian view. But here, as always, we have to beware of the danger of over-simplifying the problems that lie before us in attempting to understand the very puzzling universe we live in.

The contribution of permanent value is the interpretation given by Abelard and his followers of the manner in which the appeal of the Cross comes home to the sinner. In their clear insight into the fact that only by a free act of the sinner's own can he be reclaimed, that he must be *won* and not mechanically forced back, and in their teaching that when he is won back he is cured, they are on firm ground. But is the state of the sinner's soul the whole problem of atonement? That is the question. We may accept the positive teaching of the Abelardian view and then go on to ask whether its negative teaching, its denial that there is anything further to be said about the Atonement, is justified.

There are at least five difficulties in the way of accepting the Abelardian view as a complete account of the Atonement. The first is a practical one, which need not detain us long. It is of great practical importance for the work of the Church, but if that view were theoretically justified the Church would have to make the

best of it in practical work. Nevertheless it is worth pointing out that there seems to be a serious weakness in the present-day teaching of the Atonement owing to the fading out of any conviction of an objective accomplishment wrought by Christ upon the Cross. The old-time preacher could say to his hearers: "Take it or leave it. This is what Christ has done for you." And though at the moment a man might decide to "leave it," he went away with the message of an objective fact which might "come back" upon him on reflection. But if the preacher, after rightly repudiating crude and immoral presentations of that objective fact, is left with nothing to do but to try to stir up a responsive feeling to his message of God's love, and if in spite of his efforts his hearer's reply is "That leaves me cold," his failure is complete. And that seems to be the state of much of our preaching to-day.

The second and third difficulties have also a practical side. The Abelardian view of the Atonement must be classed with those views which limit the efficacy of the work of Christ to those who hear and respond to the preaching of the Christian Gospel. Personally, as the years go by, I find borne in upon me more and more the conviction that countless men and women have found and do find salvation without any conscious relation to the Christian body; but that nevertheless their "good works are acceptable to God" in virtue of the work of our Lord; that many who have not learned in this life

what they owe to Christ will wake up to a grateful recognition of their indebtedness in the next. The grounds of this conviction will be sketched in what follows. The present point is a curious result of the Abelardian emphasis on the loving-kindness of God. It seems to lead to a dilemma. Countless multitudes are, as a matter of fact, untouched by the message of God's love revealed in Christ. If their salvation depends on their hearing and responding to that message, then we are back in that slough of immoral theology which proclaims a destiny of eternal doom to men and women who never had a fair chance to escape it. If it does not, then how trivial a place in the divine ordering of history is given to the revelation of God in Christ! Truly it may be said of the Incarnation: "Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus."

The third difficulty arises when we ask what message the Abelardian view has for the sinner who is already truly penitent, but cannot believe that he is forgiven. It may be said that he is the victim of false teaching about God which needs to be dispelled. From the practical point of view it is doubtful whether any means for dispelling this is so potent as the proclamation of Christ's objective accomplishment in virtue of which his fears are groundless. But this is what the Abelardian view forbids. The question is whether the penitent's need for such a ground of assurance is a morbid scruple or a rational demand. I hope to show in what follows that it is the latter.

Our remaining two difficulties arise directly out of the Abelardian view itself rather than from attempts to apply it in practice. If the life and death of Christ are to be taken as a revelation in history of the eternal love of God, then we must ask why that revelation should have taken the particular form it did. The Abelardian view has sometimes been expounded in the form of a statement that Christ suffered in order to reveal the fact that God suffers: the Cross shows what sin means to God. But this explanation of the historical events only refers back the question, and leaves us to ask: Why should God suffer? It may be possible to discount the particular form in which the details of the Passion occurred as being due to the manifold contingencies of history,[1] but if we see in them, as Abelardians rightly do, that deeper significance, we cannot transfer that explanation to the element in the divine life which they mirror forth. There is no room for a merely accidental connection between sin and suffering here. We must press home the question: Why does sin make God suffer?[2]

So the Abelardian view, even when taken by

[1] See below, chap. vii. pp. 164 ff.

[2] In recent years the Abelardian view has received powerful advocacy in the late Dean Hastings Rashdall's Bampton Lectures on *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (Macmillan, 1919). On pp. 439–43 in a criticism of a passage from Dr. Denney he approaches this problem; but his account of the historical reasons for Christ's death seem to me to overlook certain factors to which I shall call attention in chap. vii. below, and the fundamental problem, why should God suffer, does not receive the attention it demands.

itself, looks beyond itself and leaves us with an unsolved problem at the heart of the doctrine of Atonement. Our fifth difficulty challenges the premises on which that whole view, when taken to be a complete view, is based. It arises when we ask, Is it true that the state of the sinner's soul is all that has to be put right? The Abelardian assumes this to be the case, and regards the penitent sinner's demand for something more than an assurance of his own penitence as a morbid scruple. Is he right?

Let us imagine a simple case in human relationships in which one man has wronged another. Suppose, for example, that a man has cheated a friend of a sum of money. That friend has suffered two forms of pain, the pain of a loss of money and the pain of deception by a trusted friend. Now pain, in its effect on moral character, is itself neutral. Whether it will turn out to have been an ennobling or a worsening influence depends upon the way in which it is taken. The cheated man may become cynical, may feel that he was a fool to have trusted any man, and under the influence of this new point of view may himself adopt dishonest methods to recoup his loss. On the other hand, he may recognise in the wrong done to him an opportunity to cut short the further power for evil of that evil deed, and resolve to absorb its power for evil by bearing it in the spirit of love and refusing to allow it to lower his own faith in goodness and honesty as the bond of human society.

The damage done by the sinner's act, then, is twofold. There is indeed the damage done to his own soul; but there is also the damage done to the man he has wronged, and this is potentially the beginning of an ever-widening ramification of sin. Whether the wronged man absorb or propagate the evil, it is a matter now outside the sinner's own soul and beyond his control. Let us suppose that at some later date he repent of his crime. He is now identified with goodness and longs above all things for goodness to prevail in the world. But he has set in motion a train of evil which has passed out of his hands. How he must long to be assured that this train of evil has been stopped by his wronged friend, and not set forward to spread corruption in human society.[1]

There is nothing irrational or morbid in this desire of our imaginary thief to be assured of the absorption of his sin by the goodness of someone other than himself, of the man he has wronged. Now let us carry the argument a step further. In the previous section we saw that it is impossible to treat an individual solely as an individual. He only exists as a member

[1] It may be noted that appreciation of this point helps to solve a difficulty which is sometimes felt concerning the Christian duty of forgiveness. On the one hand, an unrepentant sinner cannot be forgiven; on the other, our Lord's command to forgive as we hope to be forgiven, even unto seventy times seven, seems to be absolute. What can be done is to accept and bear the suffering due to the sin in such a way as to absorb and neutralise its power for evil; indeed, to do this is the essential element in the act of forgiveness, and it can anticipate the wrongdoer's repentance.

of society, and stands towards that society in a relation of mutual interaction.[1] As he stands in this relation his sin cannot help being a sin against society, and that in two ways: he has both misused that share of the corporate life which is his to express, and has misused it in such a way as to initiate a process of corruption. The sin is thus in two ways an attack upon the goodness of the society: as its source, the society may share in it by conniving at it, as its object the society may be worsened by the way in which it takes it.[2] Two things—both quite distinct from the state of his own soul—are essential if there is to be any hope of the sinner's ultimate restoration. In its character as source the society must repudiate his evil act: in its character as object of that act it must take it in such a way as to draw its sting, receiving the pain which is the child of evil in such a way that it shall become the parent not of further evil but of good.

Though he may be a member of a multitude of lesser communities the ultimate society to which each man belongs is the moral order of the universe. In religious language we are God's offspring; in Him we live and move and have our being.[3] What is true of each and all of the lesser societies is true of their source and ground. Ultimately the source of our every

[1] Above, pp. 82 ff.

[2] *e.g.* inhuman penal laws enacted and enforced in order to save trouble.

[3] Acts xvii. 28.

act, good or evil, is God; ultimately every sin in the last resort comes up against God. It is this which produces the twofold demand on the part of the penitent sinner. He demands to be assured that God has neither connived at his sin, nor been worsened by it, that in spite of it He has remained good and loving all along. It is this assurance which the Christian Church has claimed to give him. This is the Gospel, the good news, which it exists to proclaim. Is there any essential connection between the death of Christ on Calvary as an objective fact in this world's history, and the conviction that we are justified in proclaiming this message?

iv.

In the last chapter we noticed the difference between the religious and the metaphysical ways of approach to the mysteries of the universe, a difference reflected in the use of dramatic language by the one and abstract terms by the other.[1] It will now help us if we set side by side the manner in which two fundamental problems appear when viewed from these different angles.

A. For metaphysics the most fundamental problem is that of the relation between the flow of events in the time series, and the eternal and changeless reality apart from which the time series is meaningless. So far no coherent philosophical system has been achieved except by

[1] Above, p. 58.

denying the reality of one element or the other, and the problem remains. It is close run in the race for importance by a similar problem in the moral sphere. How can goodness and evil co-exist in one and the same universe? In the face of this problem some thinkers have denied the reality of evil, some have adopted an ultimate dualism, and others have postulated an ultimate reality which is neutral and from which both are derived. But, quite apart from religion, the main stream of philosophical thought has held that somehow or other goodness is ultimate, and the problem then occurs in the form of how to account for the existence of evil. The two problems interlock. It is an eternal and perfect reality which is needed in order to make intelligible this time-series of which an integral part is the moral struggle of mankind.

B. In religious thought the former problem appears in the form of the doctrine of Creation. The problem is not solved; it is re-stated in the dramatic language of religion. The second problem appears in the form of the doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement. It has been pointed out by Dr. N. P. Williams in his Bampton Lectures [1] that the origin of the doctrine of the Fall is the apparently paradoxical conviction that God is the author and source of all that is, and yet is not the author of sinful acts. These three religious doctrines, taken together, give the

[1] *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin.* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1927.)

religious form of that optimistic view of the universe which is so constant a feature in the main stream of philosophical thought. As we have seen, to maintain this optimism in religion we need a conception of God in which He both repudiates the sinful acts of His creatures and absorbs the damage they do in such a way as to draw their sting.[1]

Now the Christian religion is based on a mental act of which the essence is the recognition in the historic Person Jesus Christ of God incarnate performing this twofold work. In the pain and suffering which He endured we see the divine repudiation of sin; in the manner in which He endured it ("Father, forgive them"[2]) we see His absorption of its power for evil. Because in Him we see God we can believe that in spite of our sins God remains good and victorious over the power of evil.

It is no good denying that at this point there is a gap or hiatus in the argument. On the one hand there is a clear apprehension of what is required in our conception of God if we are to hold an optimistic view of the universe. On the other hand there is the historic figure of Jesus Christ. To complete the argument we

[1] It is not, I believe, without good reason that the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, in which God is thought of as "a good fellow" with whom "'twill all be well" reflects an outlook of unrelieved pessimism. One may contrast the tone of such a Christian hymn as the *Venite* (Ps. xcvi.) in which God, because He is a God who "swears in his wrath that they who harden their hearts shall not enter into his rest" is also One in whom we can "heartily rejoice."

[2] Lk. xxiii. 34.

should need such a clear insight into the nature of things that we could see how the Incarnation necessarily arises out of the nature of God and His creation and the relations between them. Such insight we have not got, and until we receive it in the sphere where "we shall know even as we are known," the identification of Jesus Christ with God, on which the Christian religion is based, remains in the last resort an act of faith. Meanwhile, without putting forward any claim that they fill this gap or hiatus in the argument, I may call attention to three points which help to provide a reasonable basis for that act of faith.

1. In the first place, we cannot deny the practical value of it, the influence it has had in the lives of individual men and on the course of history. As a matter of fact it has been, and is, this acceptance of Christ as God at work on their behalf which has brought to countless penitent sinners a new hope and trust in the goodness and love of God. The classical illustration of this point is the famous passage in which St. Augustine describes what it was in the Christian religion that turned his mind towards its acceptance:

"Thou didst procure for me . . . certain books of the Platonists . . . And therein I found, not indeed these precise words, but precisely the same truth fortified with many and divers arguments, that 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the same was in the beginning with

God; all things were made by Him and without Him was nothing made that was made; in Him is life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.' Further, that the soul of man, though it bears witness to the light, is not itself that light, but God, the Word of God, is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And that 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.' But that 'He came into His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name'—this I could not find there.

"Also I found there that God the Word 'was born, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of a man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.' But that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,' this I found not there." [1]

2. A point of more directly theoretical importance emerges when we reflect that, so far as we know, it is in the time-series of creation that sin arises and provides the problem of its cure. It is the sins of actual men and women in this world that need to be absorbed; it is in this world's history that we need to see God at work absorbing them. A transcendental philosophy which treats the time-series as unreal and illusory might be content with the thought that ultimately all its evil is absorbed and neutralised in the eternal being of God; but for the thought

[1] *Confessions*, Bk. VII. chap. ix. (Eng. tr. C. Bigg). Cp. chap. xxi.

which is wrestling with the actuality of sin and pain in this world the idea of God dealing with it on this plane is, to say the least of it, congruous with what the situation seems to demand.[1]

3. Thirdly, we may start from the other end, from the historic figure of Jesus Christ, and trace the genetic origin rather than the philosophical basis of Christianity. It has often been shown that historically the Christian faith arose through devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ. The Christians, without at first realising what they were doing, adopted an attitude towards Him which upon reflection forced them to choose between the intellectual recognition of His godhead or the confession of idolatry.[2] When this time of reflection came, they chose the former because they could find no place for Him otherwise in the scheme of things, and thus came to that fuller recognition of His divine nature which was formulated in the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement.

These doctrines are not our concern, except in so far as the question is raised of the compatibility of accepting them, and also of rightly

[1] It may perhaps be suggested that in the qualitative perfection of our Lord's self-sacrifice we find the key to the difficulty of an act which took place "once for all" availing for past, present, and future sins. If there were to be an Incarnation at all, it must needs be at some particular time and place. If at that time and place the Incarnate has met the forces of evil in the spirit of "Father, forgive them," and has remained faithful to that vocation unto death, what more could He have done? He has "won the right to forgive"; and nothing could be added to His accomplishment by repeating it.

[2] See, *e.g.*, A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of The Christ.* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1926.)

picturing, in the light of modern historical criticism, the historic figure of Jesus Christ. We must now briefly consider one further important question before summing up our argument and trying to see its bearing on the main subject of our inquiry.

v.

I have tried to show that the kind of doctrine of Atonement required by an optimistic view of the universe is one which believes in a twofold activity on the part of God : the maintaining of His own goodness by the repudiation of the sinful acts of His creatures, and the atoning self-sacrifice in love whereby He negates their power for evil and speaks home to the sinner's heart to win him to repentance. We must now consider more directly the question of rewards and punishments, of Heaven and Hell.

We have seen that it is *from the point of view of the sinner himself* that the repudiating or punishing activity of God is all-important. When I have sinned it is only because I have not implicated God in my sin that I have any hope of restoration. If "He's a good fellow and 'twill all be well," then I am doomed to an ultimate pessimism. But if He has not connived at my sin and, moreover, has taken steps to prevent my sin corrupting His nature, then I may hope, upon repentance, to be restored and to share His victory. But what if I do not repent ?

Try as I will, I cannot combine an optimistic view of the universe with the belief that the answer to this question is indifferent. Let me put the matter in another way. We all know how one of the trials of this life is the ease with which we slip down, as it were, from living at the level of our higher self to that of the lower. In the morning, it may be, as we kneel before the altar and the companionship of God is very real and precious to us, it seems incredible that we should ever be the selfish and ill-tempered creatures that we have been at times in the past. And then within an hour or two all is changed; up comes the selfish motive, out slips the ill-tempered word. If there is one thing for which we long in the world to come, it is that we shall be permanently established at the higher level, that there shall be "a great gulf fixed" between ourselves finally united with God in us and all that lower self which has dogged our footsteps through life. But if that is my hope, then, if I am honest with myself, I cannot shut my eyes to the possibility of that fixation taking place on the wrong side of the great gulf. And what then?

The thought of human beings kept alive for the purpose of an eternity of torture is as repugnant to the moral consciousness as those crude and immoral theories of substitutionary atonement which we noticed above. But just as we must not allow the reaction against those theories to blind us to the inadequacy of the Abelardian theory of Atonement, so we must not, in our

flight from immoral doctrines of Hell, betake ourselves to a denial of the eternal antagonism between God and sin which is the ground of our hope in this world and the next. How that antagonism will work out in detail in the future history of individual men and women I do not know, beyond that it will be in a manner consistent with His love.[1]

What is at stake here is not merely the goodness of God and the hope of man which is based upon it, but also the freedom and dignity of man. Just as the repudiation of punishment in human society leads to the mechanical regimentation of individual life, so to deprive moral choice of its serious consequences is to reduce the level of existence to a sub-human level.

The positive conclusions we would seem to be justified in drawing are these. Goodness and penitence are the two things necessary for companionship with God, either in this world or the next. The moral quality of our life does matter both here and hereafter. Neither on earth nor in the beyond can the unrepentant sinner enjoy the presence of God. But is final impenitence possible ? We do not know. *If it is*, then final exclusion from God's presence is more than possible, it is certain. Meanwhile we should not forget the sobering thought of its possibility,

[1] The most reasonable attitude towards this problem appears to me to be one which refuses to decide between universalism and conditional immortality. *If* there be anyone who dies in a condition of total incapacity for improvement, I can see no ground for anticipating his continued existence ; but whether there ever has been or ever will be such a case, I do not know.

especially if we find ourselves embarked upon a way of life which is steadily leading in that direction.

A further consequence of this argument remains to be noticed. If the fundamental conception of the Christian religion be the goodness [1] of God, then goodness of human life is that for which God looks in those who are to share His life. It is impossible to make the line between those who are and those who are not "in the way of salvation" coincide with that between those who are and those who are not consciously related to the Incarnate Saviour. To use an apt phrase of Baron Von Hügel, we must not refuse to recognise the working of "the unincarnate Logos" in all that is good and true and beautiful on earth outside the sphere of that which acknowledges its origin as springing from the Incarnation.[2] In other words, our doctrine of the Atonement must be such as to allow of its benefits being shared by those who have never heard of it. How this is possible if the essence of the doctrine lies in the acceptance of it I do not know. But if the heart of the doctrine is an objective accomplishment wrought by God in Christ by which forgiveness is not created by but waiting for the penitent sinner, then this condition may be fulfilled. I have tried to illuminate this conception by the suggestion of

[1] To prevent confusion, let me say that I use "goodness" as the inclusive term which includes both righteousness and love.

[2] See *Essays and Addresses in the Philosophy of Religion* (London, 1921), p. 134.

an act of absorption of the power for evil of the world's sin. Whether this be satisfactory or no, the need of *some* conception of "something accomplished, something done" remains, if we are to avoid either consigning the multitudes of the heathen to perdition or reducing the Incarnation to a triviality. But if on the Cross of Calvary we can see "the one perfect sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction" offered by God incarnate on behalf of man in order to win the right freely to forgive their sins, then we may believe that thousands who have served Him without knowing it in this world will wake up in the next to discover with joy what they owe to Him.

vi.

It is now time to gather up the threads of this chapter and to return to our point of departure, the teaching of our Lord.

Rooted in the fundamental nature of things we find the problem of the relation between the temporal and the eternal interlocked with that of good and evil. Any religion which claims to be adequate to the universe must have within it these problems, and so we find them reappearing in Christianity in the form of the doctrines of Creation and Atonement. According to the first, God creates beings with relative independence and freedom. According to the second, while antagonistic to their evil deeds, out of His love He has taken upon Himself to draw their sting by His own self-sacrifice.

In the last chapter we saw that the heart of our Lord's teaching was the righteousness and love of God, the proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom whose laws are righteousness and love, the call to men to repent and so come within that kingdom. But if "what was characteristic of the eschatological teaching of Christ was that its whole tenor was determined by His ethics," it is none the less true that this ethical teaching was by Him conceived and presented in the terms of the apocalyptic thought of His time. This dramatic representation of the nature of reality was, we have seen, the natural religious way of looking at things. Only in this way could the truth be apprehended and taught by one who was living as man in Palestine at the beginning of our era. It is not surprising, therefore, that in His teaching the eternal antagonism of God and sin should appear in the form of sayings about rewards and punishments.

Let us try for a moment reverently to enter into the mind of our Lord as He stood there, the prophet of the Kingdom, calling men to enter in by the way of repentance. One thing we have seen He would not do, compel them to come in by the application of external compulsion.[1] It was their own voluntary acceptance of the ideals for which He lived and was prepared to die that was required. Here, then, was His dilemma. On the one hand He knew the impossibility of the unrepentant sinner enjoying the Father's companionship. On the other He knew

[1] Chap. iv. p. 63.

the futility of any attempt mechanically to force them into conformity with the Father's will. What, then, could He do? Saddened by the sight of the contrast between the crowds that thronged the broad way and the few who sought the strait gate He proclaimed in the language of His time the stern warning "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish," [1] and spoke of the rewards of those who turned from sin. It was not an appeal to base motives, to fear of punishment or love of gain; it was a bare statement of fact, born of His own knowledge of the joy of His Father's companionship and the condition of it, and wrung from Him by His love for those He saw ignoring and rejecting it.

This was one thing that He could do, but there was also another. That our Lord, during the days of His humiliation on earth, was conscious of Himself as God incarnate there is no clear evidence in the Gospels. But that He believed Himself to be God's Messiah, and so the unique supernatural representative of God among men, is abundantly clear. His Messianic vocation meant for Him the call to suffer and die as the Servant of Jehovah, and through suffering and death to pass to the glory of the Son of Man. In the prophecy from which He drew His inspiration a redemptive power was ascribed to the patient and loving endurance of suffering and death by the ideal Servant of Jehovah; He, as the Father's representative, could take upon Himself to bear men's griefs

[1] Lk. xiii. 3.

and carry their sorrows, to be wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. "The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It is enough for us that in His human mind He claimed to do this as the Father's representative, as God's Messiah. It could be left to later generations to see that this task could be accomplished by none other than God Himself.

And so, because for Him His Messiahship meant the call to bear the burden of the sins of mankind, He could mingle with publicans and harlots and freely proclaim the forgiveness of God to all who repented of their sins. There was no need for Him to speak of any further condition beyond repentance as necessary for their forgiveness. The love of the Father, the joy of His companionship, the need of repentance in order to enjoy it, these were His messages for the multitude. The rest was for Himself, something to be done, not talked about. Only sometimes in the circle of His friends He would speak of that which lay before Him: "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him." "The Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death." [1]

It is commonly held that the Christian doc-

[1] Mk. ix. 31; x. 33; Mt. xvii. 22; xx. 18; Lk. ix. 44; xviii. 31. On the genuineness of these sayings, see the notes *ad loc.* in A. E. J. Rawlinson's *Commentary on St. Mark.*

trine of the Atonement does not go back to the mind of Christ, but was invented by the earliest Christians as an attempt to dispel the scandal of the Cross. This view seems to me to be a relic of the days when Jesus was looked upon merely as the teacher of the Fatherhood of God, who made no dogmatic claims on His own behalf. It is this view which gives rise to the effort to discredit the " ransom for many " passage as a late " ecclesiastical addition " to the Gospel. Here, surely, is one of the points on which the implications of the contribution made by the " eschatological school " to our understanding of the Gospels are not yet as widely recognised as they should be. If, as I have tried to show, the Gospels give us the picture of One who believed Himself to be the Messiah, then there is no antecedent objection to the view that this idea of Messiahship brought with it into His mind the thought of Himself as called to die for the sins of mankind. Even if He were but a human fanatic with a delusion of Messiahship, he might have drawn this idea from the " Suffering Servant " passages in the Old Testament. The question is whether the " ransom for many " passage is to be treated as evidence that He did so draw it, or not. Now the Jesus who was merely a teacher of an ethic based on the Fatherhood of God is not the Jesus of history, and, if there is anything in the argument of the earlier part of this chapter, the proclamation of divine forgiveness without a doctrine of a divine act of atonement provides a religion with a theology

inadequate to the philosophical problems of the universe. Once more the choice seems to lie between finding in Jesus Christ either a deluded fanatic who thought he was Messiah, and One into whose human mind the knowledge of His unique relationship to God and man came by way of the Messianic traditions of the Jews. If, as I believe, a critical study of the Gospels is consistent with the view that as Messiah He viewed His suffering and death as a call to bear the burden of human sin, it is from this source that the Christian doctrine of the Atonement has sprung.

CHAPTER VI

Miracles

There was a time when the Gospel miracles were the obvious evidence to be quoted in proof of the godhead of Christ. That time is so far past that nowadays those who believe in the miracles usually do so on the strength of their religious faith in Christ. They do not base that faith on the evidence of the miracles, but accept the miracles as a result of the faith, often perhaps wishing that they were absent from the narrative, and the faith by so much simplified. But they are there, and one who would write an introduction to the study of the Gospels must not run away from the task of trying to define his attitude towards them. However reluctant he may be to set foot upon ground so often traversed in controversy, however conscious he may be of having little of any value to contribute on a subject that seems to be worn threadbare, however much he may shrink from committing himself and may prefer to maintain an attitude of suspended judgment, he must make the attempt.

It has been a common practice to make a distinction between what have been called

"miracles of healing" and "nature miracles," including among the latter the Virgin Birth of Christ and His Resurrection. In this chapter I propose to separate these two from such other "nature miracles" as our Lord's walking on the water, quelling the storm, or feeding the multitudes, and for the purposes of discussion to make the main distinction between those miracles which are narrated as actions of Christ during His earthly life, and these two which are recorded as marking His entry upon and His passing from the period of His humiliation. I shall first offer some general reflections on the miraculous element in the Gospels as a whole, and then make some suggestions both as to the Birth and Resurrection of Christ, and as to the "mighty works" ascribed to Him during His ministry. It will not, however, be possible to avoid a certain amount of overlapping in the treatment of these various divisions of the subject.

i.

The first fact which seems to me to emerge from the long drawn out controversy over the subject of miracles is the breakdown of what may be called the purely historical method of inquiry in its application to the study of the Gospels. It was natural that this application should be made: it is valuable that its inadequacy should have been demonstrated by its failure.

What is meant by the use of this method is the removal of the events in the Gospel narrative, and in particular the miraculous events, out of the sphere of theological or philosophical discussion, and the attempt to discover whether or no they took place by what would be called "the ordinary rules of historical evidence." To study the question in this way it would be necessary to undertake a careful investigation of the various documents under consideration, to discuss the history of their formation, and by careful literary criticism to estimate the value as evidence of each relevant passage contained in them. No student of the New Testament can fail to be thankful for the great increase in our knowledge which has come from the impulse given to this subsidiary branch of inquiry by the needs of the historical method.

It was natural that this method should be applied. In the nineteenth century there was a very general reaction against philosophical discussion. It found expression in the desire of Ritschl to build a theology on foundations free from metaphysics. It found expression elsewhere in attempts to substitute psychology for metaphysics as the foundation of theology. It found expression also in devotion to this so-called method of pure history. It was a method which held out promise of fruitful results. In contrast with the seemingly endless discussions of philosophical theologians there were the assured results of this method in the study of Old Testament history, where our knowledge of the

facts had been improved out of all recognition. What wonder that men turned from an apparently endless ploughing of the philosophical sands and tried to prepare themselves for the discovery of truth by ridding their minds of all philosophical pre-suppositions which might bias them in the weighing of historical evidence ?

The impossibility of thus divorcing history from philosophy has been often maintained, and we need not again go over the arguments which establish this point. What it is now interesting to notice is that the method itself has not produced the results which were hoped for. The most careful investigation of the evidence for the Gospel miracles has not produced any general agreement on the question whether they happened or no. The only conclusion open to an unprejudiced mind is that it is impossible, as a matter of " pure history," either to establish them as certain facts or to deny that they ever happened. As a matter of " pure history " the evidence is inconclusive. It is capable of either interpretation, and the interpretation given by different students depends on philosophical considerations. We are driven back to the abandoned methods of philosophical discussion. If certainty is ever to be reached it will be by a study of history in which philosophical theology plays an important part.

In this, as in all inquiries, our aim is to reach knowledge, and for philosophy that is no true knowledge which does not include understanding what we know. When we are dealing with the

actions of any character in history we cannot be satisfied merely with knowing what he did. We want to see his actions in their relation to his character, to see them as the expression of his mind, and so to understand them. It is a small thing merely to know that they happened if we know no more than that. Moreover, in cases where it is disputed whether or no certain events did happen, it is only by arriving at such an understanding that we can decide the question.

In any branch of scientific study the procedure is surely the same. The observer notices some strange phenomenon new to his experience. Has he been mistaken in his observations? If he can repeat them time and again he may be able to satisfy himself on this point, but even then he will not be fully satisfied until he has accounted for them. If he cannot, then he will only be able to assure himself that his eyes had not deceived him if he can assure himself of the possibility of what he believes himself to have observed. He starts, that is, from mere fact, but he can only establish its existence as that by coming to understand it as more. In the study of history we have a certain amount of evidence for the occurrence of certain events. So far they are mere facts of observation. We may have considered all the evidence there is, and find it insufficient to convince us that these events did happen. We must try, then, to view these alleged events in relation to the circumstances of the time in which they are said to have occurred, and especially in relation to the

characters of the people in whose life stories we find them. In this way only can we decide whether it is reasonable to believe that they happened.

It seems to me that we have reached this stage in the discussion of the Gospel miracles. The historical evidence has been collected, tabulated, classified, weighed and sifted again and again. By itself it has been found insufficient either to establish or to discredit the miracles. We are driven back again to consider the nature of Him in the story of whose life they occur. But this involves, as the history of Christian thought abundantly shows, consideration of the whole nature of the Universe, whether behind all there be not a God in whose godhead is one Person who for us men and for our salvation was made man.

We have found a great difficulty in the study of the Gospels to lie in the fact that while our Christology must be able to assimilate the Gospel picture, so that that picture goes to the making of the theory, yet equally will the interpretation of each single incident in the narrative depend on the Christology.[1] We are here face to face with an instance of this difficulty. How are we to meet it ?

It is clear that to base a Christology on the miracles and then to accept the miracles on the basis of that Christology is not a satisfactory proceeding. But what if the two are indeed linked together, if we have what evidence there

[1] Above, chap. i. p. 4.

is of the miracles just because, Christ being what He was and is, they did happen in His life on earth? How could we help looking on the miracles as evidence of Christ's godhead, and on His godhead as the explanation of the miracles? Could a believer in the miracles hope to avoid having brought against him the charge of arguing in a circle?

There are two things he can do by which, whether or no he escape the accusation, he may assure himself of the honesty of his own convictions. First, he will refuse to isolate the miracles from the rest of his knowledge of the life of Christ, and to treat them as in any way peculiar evidences of his Lord's divinity. He will remember that the Gospels are mainly the record of the life of Christ in the days of His humiliation, and that belief in His godhead is based not on the picture of Him in the Gospels but on the belief of the primitive Church handed on in tradition and formulated in the Creeds.[1] If he looks on the miracles as evidence of that godhead, it is as corroborative evidence of a belief already held. It is thus that they were put down by the writers of the New Testament. It was not the evidence of the miracles which produced their faith in Him as Messiah, let alone their faith in Him as God. Many a miracle had St. Peter seen before he could bring himself to say "Thou are the Christ." Many a miracle was seen by Judas Iscariot, and yet he betrayed his Master as a false claimant to Messianic dignity.

[1] See above, chap. i. p. 2.

Later, when the worshippers of their risen Lord collected reminiscences of the days of His flesh, there were stories of miracles among them. In just such a way the Christian, first sharing the worship of his spiritual ancestors, comes to the record of the miracles in the narrative of the Gospel. Perhaps, as we said above, he sometimes wishes that they were not there. But there they are.

Secondly, he will beware of letting his belief in Christ's godhead be an excuse for undue credulity on the subject of miracles. He will not let it lead him to accept uncritically any and every miracle that has ever been attributed to Christ. He will have respect enough for methods of historical criticism to demand reasonably good evidence for such miracles as he does believe in; he will see that his faith is disciplined by careful testing at the bar of history. He will notice the contrast between the fanciful miracles found in many of the apocryphal Gospels rejected by the Church, and those in the books which the Church accepted as her official historical documents. Moreover, even within the Gospels he will consider each miracle on its own merits, and weigh carefully the evidence for it, considering both the source in which it is found and its relation to the character and work of Christ. He may, for instance, come to reject the finding of the stater in the fish's mouth and the appearance of the ghosts after Christ's resurrection,[1] and he may think it an error of interpretation which led the

[1] Mt. xvii. 27; xxvii. 51–53.

early writers to look on the death of the herd of swine as a miracle of Christ.[1]

What more I have to say in development of the ideas already put forward will come best in the later sections of this chapter. But there are two more points which must be dealt with before we leave the subject of miracles in general.

The position we have reached so far may be summarised as follows. The historical question of the occurrence of the Gospel miracles cannot be considered apart from philosophical reflection on their possibility, and that philosophical reflection must include discussion of the nature of Him in whose life they are said to have occurred. The Christian who believes in the miracles does so on the ground that his knowledge of the nature of the universe is not such as to justify him in denying their possibility, that they occur in connection with the life of One whom he believes to be God incarnate, and that there is reasonable historical evidence for their having actually happened.

One point which has been insufficiently discussed is the *a priori* possibility of miracles occurring. We have argued that this philosophical question must be treated as all-important in dealing with the historical question of the occurrence of the Gospel miracles, but the philosophical question itself we have not attempted to thrash out. Nor can we here. That is subject enough for a book in itself. To attempt to deal with it as a side-issue in one chapter of an

[1] Mk. v. 12, 13 ; Mt. viii. 31, 32 ; Lk. viii. 32, 33.

introduction to the Study of the Gospels would be worse than useless. This chapter has only been written because anyone who writes such a book will have to deal with accounts of miracles sooner or later, and, as was said above, must define his attitude towards them.

I would just say this, however. We seem to me to be emerging from the tyranny which the mechanistic view of the universe exercised over the thought of the last century, and the present generation does not grow up, as did the last, with the unquestioned presupposition of a belief that "miracles do not happen." So far as I can see, that tyranny, like all tyrannies, rested on no secure foundations of truth. Beliefs often linger after the grounds on which they are based have passed away, and prejudice against miracles, where it remains, seems to me to be one of those lingering beliefs. It rests on a scientific attitude which has been undermined by philosophic criticism, and should share its fate.[1]

One objection to our argument must here be considered. The statement that the historical question involves the philosophical, and that our belief as to the occurrence of the Gospel miracles depends on our belief as to the nature of the Universe, may be allowed. It may then be urged, however, that included in our knowledge of the Universe is the fact of human credulity, and that it is just this fact which makes miracles

[1] See, *e.g.*, Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Macmillan, 1926); Wieman, *Religious Experience and Scientific Method* (Macmillan, 1926).

most difficult of belief. There is an inevitable tendency in the human mind to ascribe miracles to heroes and saints, especially in the uncritical ages of pre-scientific thought. In the case of others than Christ we can trace the growth of miracle legends. In the case of Christ Himself the Apocryphal Gospels, and perhaps the Canonical Gospels themselves, contain such elements. Is it not at least likely that here is the explanation of all the Gospel miracles, especially when the Gospels are viewed, as they are in this book, as emanating from believers in the godhead of Christ ?

This objection seems to me to prove too much. We have suggested that there are certain alleged miracles, for none of which is there undisputed historical evidence of their occurrence. We have asked that each of these should be considered on its own merits, and should be considered in relation to the questions of the Person of Christ and the nature of the Universe. We have maintained that, even if any of them did happen, we can only establish the fact by understanding them in those relations. Then, and then only, can we say that we *know* that they happened. But now, before we set out on the task of establishing or discrediting the events alleged to have occurred by the only possible method, by passing from the finding of evidence for them as mere facts to the understanding of them, we are asked to beg the whole question on the ground that the fact of human credulity makes any further investigation unnecessary. It

seems to me that in such an investigation all the possibilities of error on the part of witnesses, narrators, and writers, including the possibility of credulity, must be taken into consideration. The likelihood of such factors having distorted the evidence must be carefully weighed as each miracle is discussed. But to erect that possibility into a reason for prejudging the whole question, for concluding that no further discussion, either historical or philosophical, is of any value, is surely too sweeping a judgment.

ii.

I propose to treat separately the questions of Christ's birth and resurrection, not because of their superior importance, but because of their comparatively small moment for our present purpose. This book aims at sketching the lines along which I have come to find the character of our Lord stand out and grow in richness of content as it was revealed in the days of His flesh. This can be done without raising the question of the manner in which He began and ended those days. I shall therefore say what little I wish to say about these two miracles as shortly as possible.

There is no doubt about what is disputed in regard to the birth of Christ, but in the problem of the Resurrection there often seems to me to be a good deal of confusion as to what are the points at issue. It will therefore be best first to try to set these out clearly.

If the dispute were merely between Christians who believe that Christ rose again and others who do not, the issue would be simple enough. But it is not so. The most interesting discussions on the Resurrection are between Christians who differ about the precise meaning of the word, and about the manner of our Lord's entry upon His risen life. All Christians, it seems to me, would be agreed that our Lord's life did not end on Calvary, that in some way He now lives on as the unseen Lord and Master of us all. But then there arises a dispute between those who speak of a " bodily " and those who speak of a " purely spiritual " Resurrection.

Now this dispute, so far as I can see, is largely based on confusion of thought on both sides. When we try clearly to understand what is the contention of both parties we find that it narrows itself down to one simple point, and that much of the controversy is really a disputing about words which seem to describe a bone of contention that does not really exist.

Those who speak of a " bodily resurrection " speak of Christ rising " with a spiritual body." They think of His body as being " spiritualised " in its passing from Good Friday to Easter Day. They affirm their belief in a manner of resurrection which is " non reditus sed transitus."

Now when we try to think clearly what this means, what difference is there at all between a " spiritual " resurrection and a resurrection " with a spiritual body " ? If there is to be any meaning at all in the distinction between

a material body and a spiritual body, as the distinction is made by these would-be defenders of the traditional Creed, they must use the word "body" in the latter phrase to denote a spiritual, not a material, reality. They speak of Christ as having, after His resurrection, a "spiritual body." That means a body not necessarily compounded of flesh and blood, not subject to any limitations of time and space, perhaps best described as the adequate means of His self-expression in the spiritual world. But where, then, is the difference between ascribing to Him existence in such a "spiritual body" and in speaking of a "spiritual resurrection"? I can see none.

It may be objected that in the accounts of Christ's appearances after His resurrection He is represented as having appeared with a body that could be seen and touched. True, but that is to say that He appeared with a body not spiritual but material, and the acceptance of the evidence for these appearances must cause as much difficulty to those who speak of His resurrection with a spiritual body as to those who speak of a spiritual resurrection. It would seem as though this evidence could only be accepted at its face value on some such theory as that of the Bishop of Birmingham, who regards the material form in which our Lord on each occasion manifested Himself as a special creation, a material body brought into existence for the express purpose of manifesting to the disciples on earth His continued life. It was not that He

brought in through locked doors a body that could be touched, but that from the elements in what would seem to human eyes to be the empty space in the room He formed for Himself the body which the disciples saw and touched.[1] Another suggestion, requiring a more critical reading of the Gospel narratives, has been put forward by Dr. Selwyn of Cambridge, in which the Resurrection appearances are assimilated to the " veridical visions of the mystics." [2]

In the present state of our knowledge all such theories can be at best little better than guesses. Three factors are required : (*a*) an analysis of " physical body " in terms of its constituent elements ; (*b*) an analysis of " spiritual body " in terms of its constituent elements ; and (*c*) an understanding of the relations between these so that we can grasp the process of the transformation of the physical into the spiritual and the subsequent manifestation of the spiritual in physical or quasi-physical form. Now it so happens that on all these three points our ignorance is just about as complete as it can be, and the confusion of thought which results from ignoring this fact is more common in contemporary theology than one could wish.[3] As I have suggested, it seems

[1] Barnes, *Spiritualism and the Christian Faith.* (London : S.C.M., 1920.) Cp. C. Harris, *Pro Fide* (London, 1914), p. xlviii.

[2] *Essays Catholic and Critical* (Macmillan, 1926), Essay IX.

[3] *e.g.* confusion of the spiritual antithesis of good and evil with the antithesis between spiritual and material ; and the notion that what is spiritual becomes less so by being expressed in a physical embodiment.

to me the wiser course not to define " body " (whether physical or spiritual) in terms of constituent elements, but in terms of function. A " body " is a means of self-expression appropriate to the sphere in which activity is to be exercised. A " human physical body " is the means of self-expression of a man or woman appropriate to this world of space and time of which we have experience ; a " spiritual body " would be such a means of self-expression appropriate to a " spiritual world." What either a " spiritual body " or its " environment " would be like we have no means of imagining ; still less do we know what we mean by speaking of a particular spiritual body as being continuous with a particular physical body. It is difficult enough to say what is the same in an acorn and the oak which it becomes [1] ; how can we then dogmatise about the principle of continuity between a physical and a spiritual body ? If we believe that after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ there was such a continuity, we shall be wise to admit that we are ignorant of the " mechanism " of the event which thus remains mysterious to us, a fact which we may symbolise by using to describe it the words of a foreign language, " non reditus sed transitus."

We do not know, then, what are the constituent elements of a " spiritual body," nor are we prepared to define just how our Lord appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection.

[1] Cp. Joseph, *The Concept of Evolution*. (Oxford University Press, 1920.)

On the historical problem of the discrepancies between the different accounts of the Resurrection there is hardly anything that can usefully be said within the limits of this book. So far as I can see all attempts at weaving them into a single harmonious narrative break down at one point or another ; many of them at many points ; and the question remains how it was that the various traditions of Galilean and Jerusalem appearances incorporated in the Gospels had come to supersede the single harmonious tradition which St. Paul had received from those who instructed him in the Christian faith.[1] I have sometimes thought that possibly the discrepancies in the accounts might partly be accounted for on the hypothesis that some of the disciples, when " they all forsook him, and fled," [2] went away to Galilee, while others remained in Jerusalem, that Christ manifested Himself to both parties, and that the possibility of recovering the chronological order of these events (which on this hypothesis was never great) was hopelessly lost with the growth of the supposition that the whole body of disciples remained together throughout and were concerned in both series of appearances. But the detailed discussion of this question belongs properly to other inquiries than ours. It is enough for our purposes if we may conclude that while discrepancies remain which cannot be explained away, they are not such as to discredit a general belief in the fact that our Lord

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 1–8.
[2] Mk. xiv. 50 ; Mt. xxvi. 56.

did manifest Himself as risen to His disciples in such a way as to convince them of His resurrection, and to send them forth as witnesses to that fact. The early chapters of Acts are clear evidence that it was faith in the Messiahship of Christ based on their conviction of His resurrection which gave the disciples their gospel, and that on this faith the Church was built. Whatever the discrepancies in detailed accounts which grew with the handing down of tradition from that time to the time when the Gospels were written, they bore united testimony to the fact that the Lord Jesus was risen again and had appeared to them.

We return to what is really the point in dispute between those believers in the Resurrection who differ as to its nature. It narrows itself down to the question of the value of the evidence for "the empty tomb." The question is that of the relation between the physical body of our Lord which was laid in the sepulchre after the Crucifixion and the spiritual body with which He appeared on Easter morning. Did that physical body suffer the processes of decay to which the mortal bodies of mankind are ordinarily subject, or was it in some miraculous way transformed, so that we may speak of a continuity of existence between that material body and the spiritual body of the Resurrection, and that of the body of Christ we may say "non reditus sed transitus"?

When the issue is narrowed down to this point we may turn again to the question of

our Lord's Birth, and consider together the two problems, for they are similar. How are we to think of the formation of the body of our Lord's humiliation in the womb of His mother, and of its transformation in the rock-hewn sepulchre ?

These miracles share to the full that inconclusiveness of purely historical evidence of which we have spoken above. The most ardent believer in them cannot justifiably say that he *knows* that they happened. The most he can say is that from his consideration of the nature of the Universe he finds it reasonable to believe in the truth of the narratives which tell of them.

The only question I propose to touch on here is that of the relation of these miracles to Christian doctrine as a whole.

It seems to me that we must carefully distinguish between the necessity of these miracles to the truth of Christianity as a whole, and the necessity of belief in them to the faith of any individual Christian.

On the first of these questions, while the historical evidence is inconclusive, and our knowledge of all things incomplete, we cannot say that we *know* either that Christ was or was not born of a virgin, or what was the manner of the passing of His earthly body. But we can say this, that whatever was the mode of His birth and of His resurrection, it was a necessary mode. Only in that way could God become incarnate, and incarnate God rise from the dead. Let us suppose that the question was left open. Then, when we come to know even as we are known,

we shall see that if Christ were born of a virgin, only so could God become incarnate: if He were not, again only in that way could the Incarnation have come to be.

The Virgin Birth, then, and the Empty Tomb are necessary to Christian doctrine if they were true. I do not see that we can at present say more than this, or claim to assert either their truth or their necessity as a matter of knowledge.

On the second question, that of the necessity of belief in these miracles to the faith of an individual Christian, it seems to me to be quite clear that no such necessity exists. Let us assume, for purpose of argument, that these events did happen and that these miracles are necessary to the Incarnation. Even so, if a man were to believe that Jesus Christ was indeed God incarnate, though he thought of Him as born of two parents into His human life, and of His body as seeing corruption in the tomb, I do not see how he could rightly be denied the name of a Christian or membership in the Christian Church. Other Christians might think that he made his position needlessly difficult by his denials, but if he could believe in the Incarnation without believing in the Virgin Birth and the Empty Tomb, then, surely, they should have nothing but respect for the miracle of his faith.

Granted belief in the Incarnation we must surely be prepared to welcome an attitude of suspended judgment as to the manner in which it was effected. From the point of view of philosophy, which will be content with nothing

less than knowledge, such an attitude alone can be justified. For my own part, though I would be the first to deny any right to claim knowledge either of the truth or falsehood of these miracles, I am tending more and more to incline to the opinion that they did occur. I think I can now honestly say that I believe they did occur, and the more I reflect upon the questions the more that belief shows a tendency to ripen into a conviction. With that personal confession I will now leave this subject.

iii.

An attitude of suspended judgment on the points in dispute concerning the birth and resurrection of Christ need not hinder us in our own study of the rest of the Gospels. It is not so with the miracles ascribed to our Lord Himself during His life on earth. We may find this or that miracle difficult of acceptance: we may indeed maintain an attitude of suspended judgment in face of proffered explanations of *how* the miracle was worked; but a general determination to ignore the miraculous element in the life of Christ seems to me to make intelligent study of the Gospels well-nigh impossible.

There are two lines on which such an attempt may be made. First, it may be suggested that the miracles did not happen, and have been read back into the true life of Christ in which there were no such events. But the difficulty here is that the miracles seem to be so closely

woven into the texture of the Gospel narrative, even into that of the earliest documents underlying our four canonical books, that it is frankly impossible simply to lift them out and leave behind a simplified Gospel which bears any resemblance to the documents which are, after all, our historical evidence for the life of Christ. Let a man take for himself the Galilean ministry of our Lord according to St. Mark and let him separate the narrative in it from the utterances of Christ. Let him then ask how much of this is left when he has discarded the accounts which were clearly meant by the writer to be accounts of miracles.

Secondly, it may be suggested that we should leave the question of the miracles an open question and frame our conception of Christ from the other less disputed incidents of His life. Gladly would the present writer have adopted this course, and spared his readers this chapter—had he not become convinced of the futility of such a procedure. Time and again he has sat in chapel and listened to the reading of such a lesson from the Gospels as St. Mark v. or St. Mark vii. 24–viii. 26, and realised how little there was in that day's reading which was of any value to him in his attempt to fill out the details of the character of Christ; how little, conversely, his Christology was able to assimilate the Gospel picture.

There is another point arising from such reflections, which is the most important of all. It is not merely a question of finding truth by concentrating on the unquestioned evidence.

What if, after all, the miracle stories are true? Does not the very suggestion of this possibility place us in a dilemma? If they are false, to include them in the evidence on which we form our conception of Christ will be to fall into certain error. But if they are true, then to ignore so important an element in His consciousness as the consciousness of power to do these mighty works will bring us to a portrait so one-sided as to be equally erroneous. From this dilemma there seems to be no escape. If we are ever to study the Gospels so as to come to such a knowledge of our Lord in the days of His flesh as shall enable us to share His mind we must endeavour to face the problem of His miracles and come to some decision upon it.

In considering the knowledge of Christ during His life on earth we saw reason to accept the Gospel evidence that He was limited to such knowledge as was open to a human mind, always remembering that we from our experience cannot set limits to the insight open to a mind which shares continuously and fully in the mind of God. We must surely apply the same principle in our present discussion, and think of the powers exercised by Christ as being powers open to manhood where manhood is found in its perfection. Let us try along these lines to approach the problem of the miracles of Christ.

Time and again our Lord lays stress on the importance of "faith" in the working of miracles. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine

tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you." [1] I think we may be carried far into the heart of the problem if we reflect on what this "faith" means to the mind of Christ.

It seems to me that the faith of Christ differs immeasurably from the faith of any one of us in this, that it is based on a knowledge which we have not, a knowledge itself based on a consciousness of being entirely consecrated to the will of the Father.[2] It is that sharing in the divine will which gives our Lord in His human mind the knowledge that what He wills is the will of God, and it is this knowledge that what He wills is the will of God which is the parent of the faith that it shall be accomplished. If I were entirely convinced, and rightly convinced, if I *knew* that a certain thing were the will of God, were the will of the ultimate Power behind all things, should I not believe that, in spite of all appearances, it would come to pass? And can I set limits to the power which might come to me from such power and such faith?

We seem at present to be only on the threshold of discovering how great is the power in human life of mind over matter. For example, M. Baudouin's well-known description of the work of Dr. Coué at Nancy [3] opens out the possibility of fields of conquest of which few of us even dream. Slowly and painfully, it may

[1] Lk. xvii. 6; Mt. xvii. 20; cp. Mk. xi. 22; Mt. xxi. 21.
[2] Cp. above, chap. iii. p. 20.
[3] C. Baudouin, *Suggestion et Anti-suggestion.* (Paris, n.d.)

be, scientific study may discover more and more of this power, and formulate the methods by which it may be exercised. So far as I can see, the methods pursued are such as will possess a man in his entire self (his " unconscious self " as well as his " conscious self," as some psychologists would put it) with faith that what is desired shall come to pass. What if there walked on earth two thousand years ago One whose knowledge of the divine mind gave Him naturally that " faith " we strive so laboriously to acquire ?

But here we must pause for a moment and consider again the old distinction between miracles of healing and so-called " nature miracles." A thoughtful writer in *The Nation and The Athenæum*[1] has uttered a wise caution to those who jump to unwarranted conclusions from what evidence there is of the suggestive power of mind. He points out that there are things this power can do and things it cannot, and that " marvellous as are the results of faith and auto-suggestion, they are not chaotic : they are not marvellous in the conjuring-trick sense ; they offer no encouragement to superstitious belief in a ' miscellany of miracles ' where anything may happen anyhow."

This is well said, and the writer goes on to illustrate his meaning by reference to such a case as that of a hypnotised man who imagines himself to be burnt. " There will be reddening and a blister ; he will feel pain ; but there is no burn, no destruction of the tissue to be made

[1] London, April 9th, 1921, p. 57.

good. The man's belief brings about one fact, the repairing process ; or two facts if you include his pain ; his belief, strong as it is, cannot, at all events never does, bring about the burn fact, the damage heat could do, without his faith, to skin and flesh . . . In every one of the attainments of faith, and of that element of faith which we call suggestion, he uses means which have a real and vital linkage with their results. He cannot burn himself, but the blood-supply and nerve-energy with which he normally effects a healing process, are immeasurably more at his command for use or disuse than he once knew."

Approaching them on these lines I do not for myself find any difficulty now in accepting the healing miracles of Christ recorded in the Gospels. But to " explain " in this way the quelling of the storm or the feeding of the multitudes seems an unjustifiable leap. What are we to say of these actions ascribed to Him in narratives as well attested as any other records in the Gospel narrative ?

I cannot think myself unjustified in taking one step further and believing these too to have happened more or less as they are recorded. " In every one of the attainments of faith . . . he uses means which have a real and vital linkage with their results." If our Lord were living on earth for one purpose only, to fulfil the divine will ; if He *knew* that certain things were required for that will to be done ; if He were in continuous and full communion with the Source of all that is—is it a superstitious belief

that in His communion with the Father He had that means, that " real and vital linkage " with the results which He willed ? Can we deny the possibility of these miracles when we think not only of what is called " auto-suggestion " but of the unexplored possibilities of prayer ?

There is, of course, a danger lest we should allow ourselves to become hypnotized by such a phrase as " a real and vital linkage," and use the invention of a high-sounding form of words to conceal emptiness of thought. Can anything be said in justification of the suggestion made in the last paragraph ? The more one thinks about it, the clearer it seems to become that the solution of the problem will require what no one has yet reached, a satisfactory analysis and understanding of the nature of the human self. It is impossible here to do more than hint at the lines on which I should be inclined to approach this question. It seems to me that what we mean by the self is the self-conscious unity of the subject of the experiences mediated through the bodily life of the individual ; and that where all is going as it should this selfhood is not a static thing, but a growing entity in process of being created.[1] The principle of its true growth I believe to be response to the companionship of God, so that the individual

[1] As an introduction to thought on this subject I would suggest Laird : *Problems of the Self* (Macmillan, 1917) ; Bosanquet : *The Principle of Individuality and Value* and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (Macmillan, 1912 and 1913) ; Pringle-Pattison : *The Idea of Immortality* (Oxford University Press, 1922).

may be regarded either as striving upwards towards his true life from below or as having his true self communicated to him by God from above. It is not beyond the bounds of probability to think of the One Perfect Man in His human development as sharing in the exercise of the divine power to an extent which we can hardly conceive from our own limited and halting experience. Nevertheless, it is open to us in our own lives to find some measure of experimental verification of what is here suggested. We may not have advanced far enough to be able to heal the sick or raise the dead, to say nothing of walking on the water or moving mountains. But in at least one department of human activity, that of the control of our natural passions, I am becoming more and more convinced of the fact that it is possible by the grace of God to control events in the psychical and physical spheres. It is possible by the exercise of " faith " to belie the confident predictions of psychologists who have not taken this factor into account, and, for example, to make a triumphant life out of what, on the purely " natural " level, would be a life doomed to the gloomy suffering of so-called " sexual starvation." [1] When a man has made proof of this truth in his own life, he will less easily dismiss the accounts of our Lord's miracles as fictitious, for he will read them in

[1] I should like here to refer to a paper on " Birth-control and Christian Ethics " printed in the *Hibbert Journal* for October 1923. Further experience of life has tended to confirm me in the views there put forward.

the light of his experience of what Christ is doing for him in his own self.

Having reached this stage in his thought, the stage at which he is prepared to accept belief in the Gospel miracles not as a precedent ground of his faith in Christ, but rather as a fruit of that faith, he will perhaps think of two points which as yet have not been mentioned in this chapter. First, he will remember that the Gospel picture of our Lord is of One who was Himself conscious of His ability to do such mighty works as are recorded of Him. It was a power to be held strictly in restraint, and not to be used simply as a means of compelling faith in Himself.[1] But from the very beginning of His ministry this consciousness is implied, as in the story of the temptation to turn stones into bread[2]—a story which must surely have come ultimately from our Lord Himself. Moreover, he will remember that to our Lord's mind the so-called "nature miracles" presented themselves as far simpler propositions than the moral influencing of men. He seems to have thought of moving mountains as far simpler than converting Judas Iscariot or holding St. Peter firm in his faith.[3] In the sphere of "natural law" in the physical world He was Lord and Master, but where the freedom of human personality was involved He would not transgress the bounds of that self-limitation which is integral to the creative activity of God.[4]

[1] See below, chap. vii. pp. 147 ff. [2] Mt. iv. 3; Lk. iv. 3.
[3] Lk. xxii. 31–34. [4] See below, chap. viii. p. 205.

The second point to be considered is one arising directly out of the acceptance of the Christian view of the Universe which sees in the life and death of Jesus Christ God's act of atonement, that act of cosmic significance effected once for all in the history of this world of space and time.[1] When once a man has come to believe in this, it is incredible to him that our Lord's life should have been prematurely cut short by an accident, with its purpose incomplete, as any one of us might be run over by a passing motor-car. How would this consideration have presented itself to His own mind? I have argued elsewhere[2] that He was convinced of His call, when the time was ripe, openly to proclaim His Messiahship in Jerusalem, and realised with a growing clearness that this was a call to "give his life a ransom for many." May it not be that this knowledge of the Father's will for Him was the ground of the faith with which He stood calmly amid the panic-stricken disciples in the stern of the ship and said to the stormy wind and waves: "Peace, be still"?[3]

I have said enough, I hope, in this chapter to define clearly the attitude which I have come to hold on the question of miracles. To me the root of the matter is this. The miracles of Christ are worked through "faith." That "faith" was born of knowledge that certain things were necessary for Him to fulfil His mission. The question to be asked in the case

[1] See above, chap. v. [2] See below, chap. vii. pp. 160 ff.
[3] Mk. iv. 39; Mt. viii. 26; Lk. viii. 24. Cp. Lk. xiii. 33.

of each recorded miracle is how its performance helped forward His work, what was its purpose in the mind of Him who worked it. In finding that purpose we find both the explanation of the miracle and fresh knowledge of the mind of our Lord as revealed in the days of His flesh. It is along these lines, and in this spirit, that I approach the miraculous element in the Gospels in this book.

CHAPTER VII

Outlines of the Life

i.

It is now generally recognised that the Gospels are not biographies, and that the materials for writing a biography or "life" of Christ do not exist. If we take all the events recorded about our Lord and string them out so as to cover as many days as possible (that is to say, if whenever two events are not stated to have occurred on the same day, we assume them to have occurred on different days) we have enough to assign something to each of forty days. If all His recorded utterances were spoken on end, slowly and reverently, they would occupy about six hours.[1] Now according to the traditional reckoning, based on the notes of time to be found in the Fourth Gospel, the public ministry lasted for some three years. Many recent scholars, taking the synoptic narrative alone as their basis, have suggested that it lasted for a little over one year. If, for the sake of argument, we adopt this shorter reckoning, then we know something about some thirty-six out of about four hundred days. Since, however,

[1] I owe this reckoning to F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and its Transmission* (Edinburgh, 1906), p. 20.

quite a number of the events must necessarily be assigned to the earliest and latest of these four hundred days, the proportion of the gaps in our knowledge of the longer middle period becomes even greater than at first sight those figures suggest. If, therefore, we knew the order in which the events occurred, we should not know which of them followed rapidly upon another, and which were separated from each other by days, weeks, or months. This fact alone would make it impossible to link events together in any sequence in which one could be seen to arise out of another.

But this is not all. We have not even any certainty about the order of the events among one another. It is now generally agreed that the earliest of the synoptic Gospels is St. Mark, and that the authors of St. Matthew and St. Luke produced their Gospels by combining what they found in St. Mark with other material drawn from elsewhere. Careful comparison of the three Gospels has enabled us to gather something of the lines on which those two authors worked. The author of St. Matthew seems to have gone on the principle of gathering together material according to its subject-matter; thus he assembled a representative collection of our Lord's teaching into what we call "The Sermon on the Mount," and inserted the collection to lead up to the verse, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes,"[1] which

[1] Mk. i. 22; Mt. vii. 28, 29.

he found in St. Mark. St. Luke's method was different. He seems to have followed one of his sources until a convenient break occurred, when he turned to another source and followed that until again an opportunity occurred to make a change. In both cases the evidence is against the supposition that the "editing" of St. Mark was done in accordance with what the authors believed to have been the chronological order of events.

This has led many scholars to speak of the "Marcan outline" as the basis of any attempt at reconstructing the order of events in the ministry of Christ. But it is open to question whether St. Mark, any more than the other evangelists, was guided by chronological considerations in putting together his Gospel. To assume that he was is to assume that a biographical interest was the motive that lay behind his writing, and this is more than doubtful.[1]

The situation is as follows. Of the synoptic Gospels, St. Mark is the only one in which it is possible even to assume a chronological order of events, and this assumption is very questionable. If, in spite of that, the assumption be made, the disproportion between the number of events recorded and the time to be covered is so great as to make the assumption well-nigh valueless.

What, then, can be done? It is clear that the Baptism and the Temptation must be put at the beginning of the ministry, the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection at the end. Beyond

[1] See A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark* (London, 1925), pp. xix ff.

that all is hypothetical. Nevertheless, provided that the hypothetical nature of the work be clearly understood, there can be no harm in trying to arrive at some general view of our Lord's life between His Temptation and His arrest. The problem may be stated as follows: given (1) the Baptism and Temptation as the starting-point, and the Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection as the end, (2) the mind of Christ, as studied in our previous chapters, and (3) the historical circumstances of life in Palestine at the beginning of our era, it is required to find some general scheme of the ministry of our Lord which shall link the starting-point with the end and be such that the intermediate events may be distributed within it so as to fall naturally into place.

ii.

In an earlier chapter I have attempted to trace the growth of our Lord's human mind through His childhood to His Baptism and Temptation.[1] Perhaps now, in retrospect, we can see some further light on those two events. If it be true that at the heart of His conception of Messiahship was the knowledge of the Father's righteousness and love, then we can catch a glimpse of what it was in the Baptist's preaching that brought Jesus of Nazareth to him. The great Jewish prophets of old had been preachers of Jahweh's righteousness and love, and all the evidence we have about St. John the Baptist

[1] Chap. iv.

goes to show that in him there spoke anew that prophetic voice. If, now, we think of our Lord as a young man, living continuously in communion with the Father and sharing in His mind, but as yet uncertain of what this is to mean to Him in His life on earth, we can see what it was that led Him to attempt to join Himself to the Baptist's following. Here, among all contemporary teachers and preachers, was one whose message struck a note to which His whole being responded. The next step that lay before Him was to give His adhesion to this leader; this was the form which at that moment the Father's will took for Him. In obedience to that will He took the decisive step of asking for baptism at the hands of the true prophet of God, and in the taking of that step He came to the fuller knowledge of His vocation, to the knowledge of Himself as God's Messiah.[1]

Then, as we have seen, He went away by Himself to commune with the Father on what this would mean in His life. It is at this point that we must now take up the tale.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my

[1] It is argued by some writers that since St. John Baptist required repentance of those who came to be baptized, and baptized "for the remission of sins," therefore the fact that our Lord underwent this ceremony implies on His part the consciousness of sin. But this does not necessarily follow. The Baptism was an initiation ceremony, and would still retain its significance as such even in an unique case in which repentance and cleansing were unnecessary. The prevailing impression given by the Gospels is of One who was without the sense of personal sin, and the hypothetical argument from the implications of His Baptism can hardly weigh against this consistent element in the Gospels as a whole.

spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." These words from Zechariah[1] seem to describe as accurately as possible the attitude towards His life's work with which our Lord came forth from His Temptation. That righteousness and love were the essence of the Father's being and that the Kingdom of God is a spiritual Kingdom whose laws are righteousness and love He had long known: that He was the Messiah come to inaugurate that Kingdom was the conviction with which He had gone apart from Jordan into the wilderness. Now He saw clearly that neither by force nor miracle could men be drawn in and this Kingdom set up; only by their own free willing devotion to righteousness and love could they come in, and this meant that for sinful men and women the way to the Kingdom of God was by the road of repentance. What then could He do? He could go out as the Messiah, proclaiming and showing forth in His own life the righteousness and love of the Father, and calling on men and women to repent. Here, once more, was the particular form which at the moment the Father's will took for Him. So He came out with the message: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

The more I read the Gospels the more the conviction is borne in upon me that never in the course of history was there a man who thought less of Himself, or cared less that men should follow him for Himself, than Jesus Christ. He lived for the doing of the Father's will, and

[1] Zech. iv. 6.

what He looked for in men and women was that they should share His devotion to that end. Now He was come as Messiah to call them to this, and with that divine optimism which did not think of their refusing to hear the message,[1] He came forth into Galilee and began preaching to the people. Already, we may believe, He was turning to the book of Isaiah to find expression for His deepest thoughts, and we may find His own view of His work at this time in the words which He was shortly to use at Nazareth : " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord . . . This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." [2]

This first period of our Lord's ministry was marked by three things, preaching, works of healing, and popularity. A word must be said about each.

The burden of His preaching was the righteousness and love of God, the imminence of His Kingdom, seeing that the Messiah was come, and the consequent call to repentance. There is no need to illustrate these in detail; the so-called " Sermon on the Mount " [3] is well known

[1] See above, chap. iii. p. 46, chap. iv. p. 74.

[2] Lk. iv. 18, 19, 21.

[3] Mt. v.–vii. I do not mean to assert that *all* the sayings in this collection must necessarily be ascribed to this early period, but that the majority of them may fairly be taken to represent it.

and may be taken as generally representing Christ's public preaching. But one point calls for discussion. To what extent, if at all, did our Lord openly proclaim His Messiahship at the outset of His ministry? We need not here consider the view, so ably championed in America by Dr. E. F. Scott, that only gradually in the course of His ministry did He come to think of Himself as Messiah. The grounds on which I believe Him to have done so from His Baptism onwards (if not, indeed, from an earlier time) have already been stated.[1] The question before us is whether or no at the outset of His ministry He openly proclaimed this conviction to the people of Galilee, and called upon them to accept Him as the expected Messiah.

Now there are certain considerations which, at first sight, would seem to suggest that He did so. There is the witness of Christian tradition, crystallised at an early date in the Fourth Gospel. There is the claim to forgive sins as "Son of Man,"[2] which might be interpreted as a putting forward of Messianic claims. The mere fact of our Lord's use of the title "Son of Man" cannot here be used as evidence, seeing that we are ignorant of precisely what it must have meant to the ears of His audience;[3] but there is nothing in it necessarily inconsistent with the view we are considering. Again, to many readers this view would seem to rise most

[1] Chap. iv.

[2] Mk. ii. 10; Mt. ix. 6; Lk. v. 24. On this incident see below, p. 153.

[3] Above, p. 62.

naturally out of the conception of our Lord given in the previous chapters of this book; which would seem to lead up to the thought of His coming out from the Temptation to share His secret with His people, with all the enthusiasm of inspired but inexperienced youth. Other views appear to postulate on His part either a fear to commit His secret to the knowledge of His fellow men, or a clearly formulated plan of Messianic activity according to which the time for open announcement had not yet arrived. But there is no evidence either for the fear or the plan. There is evidence of a quenchless optimism concerning human nature, which only the bitterest experience could tame; and, if we are to be true to the principle that throughout His life He was living *as man*,[1] interpreting from the point of view of His constant communion with the Father the particular events of His human experience, then we must think of Him as waiting upon the events of each day to reveal the Father's will as to the next step. These considerations all seem to converge in suggesting the view that it was in experiencing the rejection of His claim to Messiahship that He learned the necessity of a temporary concealment of that claim while He devoted Himself to the training of those disciples who showed some capacity for understanding and accepting it.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the weight of opinion amongst students of New Testament history is undoubtedly against

[1] Above, chaps. ii., iii.

the view that there was any open proclamation of His Messiahship by our Lord in the early days of His ministry. At His trial His accusers apparently were unable to procure any evidence of such a claim, a fact which should make us doubt our own reading of the material in a contrary sense. But how can we avoid the improbability of a deep-laid scheme of concealment, based on a suspicious distrust of human nature?

The solution of this problem would seem to lie in a full recognition of all that is involved in the determination of our Lord's Messianic thought by ethical considerations, which we have seen to be the key to any understanding of His life.[1] We have spoken of Him as basing His claim to Messiahship on ethical grounds, and as thinking of Himself as Messiah at any rate from His Baptism onwards, if not before. If we try to think out what this involves we are led to the hypothesis of a consciousness of a unique filial relationship to the Father of an *ethical* nature which, in His human development, was temporally prior to His Messianic consciousness; it must have come first in time in order to be the ground on which He could pass to the conviction of His Messiahship. This much light seems to be reflected back upon the unrecorded years of preparation from the Gospel records of the Baptism and after.

Right from the outset this sharing of the Father's ethical outlook, which was to issue in

[1] Above, chap. iv.

the response to the Messianic vocation, must have brought with it the consciousness of its uniqueness, which was to culminate in the saying "No man knoweth the Father save the Son."[1] It cannot be that our Lord had to wait for His Baptism and public ministry to know what it was to be misunderstood, or to learn how little ready were His contemporaries for the proclamation of a Messiahship based on righteousness and love, and on these alone. He must have realised from the start, in those days in the wilderness after the Baptism, the need of continuing the Baptist's work of calling men to repentance and righteousness, in order that they might be able to share His conviction of His Messiahship when He should reveal it to them. The concealment was not due to any deep-laid scheme to plan His life according to dogmatic pre-suppositions; it was forced upon Him by the circumstances in which He found Himself at the outset of His ministry. Here, as always, we see Him finding the Father's will in the particular events which befell Him as He lived as man upon earth.

So He came out, calling men to repentance and proclaiming the advent of the Kingdom of God. But of His own part in the setting up of that Kingdom He said little as yet. He spoke of Himself as "the Son of Man," it is true; but may it not be that He chose that title just because it was ambiguous, and that our doubts concerning its precise meaning in Palestine in His day reflect the actual uncertainty that pre-

[1] See above, p. 40.

vailed then and there? If so, the use of this title, like the method of teaching in parables, would have been well-suited to the purpose He had in mind. By these methods He was able to speak honestly of what was in His mind, but to speak in such a way as not to distract attention from the main point of His teaching, its moral demand, to questions concerning His own position.

In this early period of His ministry He seems to have addressed Himself openly to all who cared to listen, and to have given Himself freely to works of healing whenever occasion arose. In regard to these, as in the case of His teaching, what we have to do is to try to see them in the light of our previous study of their Author. We have seen that in the Temptation He had put from Him the idea that by miracle men could be won to the Kingdom of God. For Him, then, they were not "mighty works" but expressions of love. When faced by human beings in pain His first thought was: "What can I do to help?" and, being who He was, His help flowed forth to the healing of mankind. Here the story of the paralytic is especially interesting. The question has been much debated why our Lord first addressed Himself to the forgiveness of the poor man's sins, and some commentators have found it so difficult that they have been led to dismiss this part of the incident as a *midrashic* elaboration of a simple healing story.[1] But surely the answer comes quite naturally

[1] *E.g.* Dr. A. E. J. Rawlinson in his *Commentary, ad loc.*

from reflection on the mind of Christ as revealed in our study. Simply and sincerely He believed that forgiveness of sins was what men most needed and would most welcome; this was the greatest gift that it was His as Messiah to offer, and confronted by the sudden emergency He spoke straight from His heart of what He held most important. But the main point is that, whether it were ills of the body or of the soul that He met with, the Son of Man had come to minister. So He ministered.

Of His popularity there can be no doubt, but whether or no there was any suspicion among His hearers that He regarded Himself as Messiah it is impossible to determine. We know that crowds followed Him and pressed upon Him, but as to their motives, beliefs, and expectations there is no evidence. Doubtless among the crowds there were all sorts of fluctuating opinions, from the idlest curiosity to the most intense Messianic hope. It is foolish to attempt to account for the crowds on any one basis. Crowds had gone to hear John the Baptist. Now a new teacher had arisen with an even more arresting presence and message, and One, moreover, who was becoming known as a Healer of men's ills. This is quite sufficient to account for the crowds and the early popularity. How long this period lasted we cannot tell. It seems reasonable to assume that it was long enough for Jesus to have gathered round Him an inner body of disciples who were more closely knit to Him than the multitudes as a

whole. The definite selection of the Twelve was to come later; the stories of the calling of the earliest Apostles [1] probably refer to the gathering together of a group of disciples out of which that selection was afterwards made, and we need not believe that these calls were as abrupt and unprepared for as the *prima facie* reading of the Gospel narrative suggests.

But this period of frank and open popular preaching was not to last. More and more it must have become clear to our Lord that He was making no real headway with His work, that the popularity He was gaining was based on no real understanding and acceptance of His message, and was fast becoming more of a hindrance than a help. His conception of the Kingdom of God and of Messiahship was so unlike that of His hearers that even as He spoke the meaning of His words was transmuted in their hearing of it. Even if any of His hearers had gone so far as to think of Him as a possible claimant to Messiahship, they would have taken that to mean that He was about to vindicate the Jews against the Gentiles by force of arms or miraculous power. When He worked a miracle of healing as the expression of love they saw the miracle but were blind to the love. As He continued to preach the imminence of the Kingdom but continued also to manifest none of the expected marks of its coming beyond the wonderful works, misunderstanding grew and popularity wavered. Some were beginning to think of Him

[1] Mk. i. 16–20; Mt. iv. 18–22; Lk. v. 1–11.

as a man who had gone out of His mind.[1] St. John the Baptist sent from prison a message which voiced the prevalent confusion.[2]

About this time Jesus must have become aware that danger was threatening. Representatives of official Judaism were beginning to take an interest in the claims of this local prophet,[3] and should His Messianic convictions become known persistence in what must appear to them as an imposture could lead only to the penalty of blasphemy. The news of the death of the Baptist came along, showing the fate that awaited the uncompromising preacher of righteousness.[4] Nothing is more dangerous than popular disillusionment about a popular idol, and (if the story in St. Luke can be relied on as historical) [5] our Lord had one experience at least of the risks that attend the disappointing of an expectant audience. After His sermon at Nazareth in which He tried to warn His hearers from following Him as a miracle-worker He had to save Himself from the crowd who wished to hurl Him down a precipice.[6]

He was making no headway, and He was in danger of losing His life with nothing accomplished. The optimism with which He had proclaimed the Kingdom of God in expectation that the people of God would rise up to under-

[1] Mk. iii. 21. [2] Mt. xi. 2 ; Lk. vii. 19.

[3] Mk. iii. 22 ; vii. 1. But see Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1917), p. 13.

[4] Mk. vi. 30 ; Mt. xiv. 13.

This seems doubtful. See Dr. Easton's *Commentary, ad loc.*

Lk. iv. 23–30.

stand and welcome His message had been frustrated by this lack of response. He was ready to suffer and die for the Kingdom, but first He must take steps to ensure that there would be those who would understand His message and continue to preach it when He was gone. The next step to be taken, the form in which the present circumstances revealed the Father's will for Him, was to choose and train a small body of men to be instructed in the "mysteries of the Kingdom" with a view to this work. It was not by His wish that they were mysteries;[1] He would have shared them freely with all who could receive them. But facts are facts, and the fact was that they were mysteries to the multitude.

There must have been some reason for the choice of the Twelve. Doubtless it is absurd to think that any adequate account of this reason can be given in general terms; the character of each man must have been known to our Lord and individually considered. But it is reasonable to suppose that they were those who showed some glimmering of a capacity to understand what was in His mind. It was not more than a glimmering, and even to the end there was much that they never understood till the Resurrection and Pentecost enlightened them. But they were the best He could find, and so "He appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."[2]

[1] This phrase is probably a gloss in Mk. iv. 11.

[2] Mk. iii. 14.

I cannot help thinking of the parable of the Sower [1] as summing up the first period of our Lord's ministry. The Twelve were taken from the "good ground" in which the seed of the Word had taken root and held promise of bearing fruit. And it seems to me also that parables such as those of the leaven, the seed growing secretly, and the mustard seed [2] may reasonably be ascribed to the end of that period and the beginning of the next. They reflect not merely His teaching for the world, but also His own growing realisation of the Father's will. It was not by a sudden catastrophic event that the Kingdom of God would appear at once in response to His first preaching. It may have been with some such hope that He came out from the Temptation, but now He saw that it was not so. He must begin in a small way with a few persons, and His work grow outwards from the centre. This was the Father's will, and to this He turned.

But now it was possible to formulate in a general way a plan for His future work. For the time being He must avoid publicity and danger. He could now see clearly enough the end to which He was called; sooner or later He must proclaim His message to God's people in unmistakable terms, and force their official leaders to face it and pass judgment upon it. He was fast losing any illusions He may have had as to the issue of this. Sooner or later He

[1] Mk. iv. 3–8; Mt. xiii. 3–8; Lk. viii. 5–8.
[2] Mk. iv. 26–32; Mt. xiii. 31–33; Lk. xiii. 18–21.

must provoke the crisis, but the time was not yet. How long it would be delayed depended chiefly on the rate of progress with which His chosen followers could be trained.

It is most probable that at this time He was meditating deeply on the mystery provided by the growing clearness with which He saw His end before Him, and was coming to interpret them in the light of the Isaianic Suffering Servant and the Danielic Son of Man. So, with all reverence, we may think of the incarnate Son of God learning from His earthly experience to understand the deepest mysteries of His human life. We have seen Him in His growing human consciousness come to the knowledge of Himself as Child, as Man, and as Messiah.[1] Now He knew Himself to be the Saviour of mankind. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." [2]

We do not know how long this second period lasted, nor in what order the events which seem most naturally to belong to it should be arranged. These are those events in which our Lord is seen to be avoiding populous centres, exercising a stringent economy both in public preaching and in works of healing, and enjoining secrecy on those whom He cured.

The turning-point of this period seems to have been the incident at Cæsarea Philippi, where our Lord asks His disciples what men think of Him. They reply that some say one

[1] See above, chap. iv. [2] Mk. x. 45; Mt. xx. 28.

thing, others another. Then comes the definite question: "But whom say ye that I am?" With the native impetuosity that made him a leader and the first to speak the thoughts of all St. Peter answers: "Thou art the Christ."

Now, at last, the moment had come for which the Christ was waiting. Now He had something on which He could build. Is it reading too much between the lines to think of Him reflecting, with a sense of relief, "Now I can go up to Jerusalem and get it over"? But it was not to be—yet. "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."[1]

It was the old temptation that He knew so well, the temptation to be some other kind of Messiah than that to which the Father called Him. He had wrestled with it in the wilderness after His Baptism; it had been pressed upon Him by the desires of the multitudes He loved and had come to serve; now it came to Him from the lips of one of His dearest friends. He saw beyond the speaker to the source from which the suggestion came, and in the intensity

[1] Mk. viii. 27–33.

of His reply we may read something of the strain under which He lived.

At last the moment came. The second period ended and the third and last began. The time for concealment was past; the time had come to throw down the glove and openly to challenge the issue between the true and the false conceptions of the Messiah. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid."[1] He arranged His entry into the city so as to fulfil Messianic prophecy, possibly with a view to kindling popular enthusiasm; though whether His action had this effect it is difficult to be certain.[2] In acts such as the cleansing of the Temple and in sayings such as the parable of the wicked husbandmen He was almost, we might say, deliberately provocative. The climax came when He was arraigned before the High Priest. To the question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." "And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death."[3]

[1] Mk. x. 32.

[2] There is no doubt of the enthusiasm, but the Marcan account does not suggest more than the welcome of the Messiah's prophet.

[3] Mk. xiv. 61–63.

iii.

In this sketch of the way in which our Lord's ministry developed I have not done more than set forth in barest outline my belief that the available evidence is best accounted for by the theory of three "periods": an open preaching, a retirement in which He concentrated on the training of the Twelve, and the emergence from this to the open avowal of His Messianic claims at Jerusalem. I have not attempted to correlate this division into three periods with any geographical scheme in which His career could be followed from place to place in Palestine, or to distribute in detail the various events and utterances among the periods. I do not think that the evidence is sufficient to enable the former task to be undertaken with any hope of success,[1] and in the latter there is so much room for individual differences of opinion that I would rather leave it to my readers to carry it out for themselves than encumber my pages with any further indications of my own opinion than I have already given. The necessity of recognising the three periods seems to me to stand out from the Gospel records. I do not wish to do more than set forth this belief. It remains to urge one or two arguments in favour of this view as a whole, and to consider one or two objections which at first sight might seem to stand in the way of its acceptance.

[1] For a good attempt at this see F. C. Burkitt: *The Gospel History and its Transmission* (Edinburgh, 1906), chap. iii.

In the first place I might urge that this scheme does, as a matter of fact, follow the general order of St. Mark's Gospel.[1] But in view of the facts noticed in the first section of this chapter too much stress must not be laid on this. Still, we cannot shut our eyes to the possibility that there *may* be some chronological truth underlying the arrangement of events in that Gospel. There is no definite evidence that they did *not* occur in that order.[2] The arguments which lead to its rejection are based on certain theories of the development of our Lord's presentation of His Messianic claims. Those theories are of the same hypothetical nature as the one set forth above, and are rivals to it. They must be considered side by side, and the relative probability of this or that hypothesis is the only possible ground of division between them. We must not allow ourselves to be swayed by the consideration that a view either follows or departs from the Marcan order. And yet, when a view which seems on other grounds to be tenable turns out to be in keeping with the order of events in the one synoptic Gospel which cannot definitely be shown not to be chronological in arrangement, we may at least feel that this is something in its favour.

The whole aim of the earlier chapters of this

[1] Cp. M. Goguel, *Jesus the Nazarene* (N.Y., Appleton, 1926), pp. 244–49. But on pp. 257 ff. M. Goguel rejects the Marcan order as unhistorical.

[2] The meaning of Papias' phrase *οὐ μέντοι τάξει* is too obscure for it to be taken as decisive on this point.

book was to urge that the earthly experiences of our Lord provided the material on which His mind worked, and that His inner life of constant communion with the Father gave Him the interpretation of that material.[1] That He came forth from His Temptation convinced of His own Messiahship, and of what were the true conceptions of Messiahship and of the Kingdom of God, but with no more fully formulated plan of action than to prepare for the sharing of this knowledge with His people and to wait upon events to reveal the further course of the Father's will for Him seems to me, as I have said, the view which is intrinsically most probable, and most in keeping with what evidence there is. Moreover, it enables us to see how naturally in accordance with the order of events the first period merged into the second and the second into the third.

The next difficulties to be considered are connected with the beginning of the third period and with the betrayal of Jesus. A great deal of discussion has recently been given to the question why our Lord on the last occasion went up to Jerusalem. I have suggested—it is no new suggestion—that it was in order to force the issue of His claim to Messiahship, and in full expectation that it would lead to His death. This death, however, was to be welcomed as the means by which He should fulfil His calling to "give His life a ransom for many." This view has recently been challenged on many

[1] See especially chaps. ii. and iii.

grounds, but chiefly on the ground that evidence of such motives on the part of our Lord is lacking. Indeed, according to some writers, the evidence is definitely to the contrary. Thus, M. Goguel writes: "So little was His death a dogmatic necessity for Jesus that in the precaution He took of quitting Jerusalem every evening, He attempted to escape from His enemies and perhaps had it not been for the treachery of Judas would have succeeded."[1]

It might be sufficient to dismiss this difficulty with the statement that here is one of those points on which the evidence is admittedly inconclusive, that scholars of the first rank are to be found on either side, and that the interpretation of this particular passage of the history depends on our view of the whole course of our Lord's work. The view I have maintained must be compared not piecemeal but as a whole with views such as those of M. Goguel. But it is worth while pausing a moment because the question here at issue raises a point of importance to the main theme of this book.

To put the question in the form whether or no His death was a "dogmatic necessity" for Jesus seems to me misleading because it suggests as it were a "hardening" in His mind of what must have been a very flexible and delicate interplay between His experience of the course of events and His finding in them the Father's will for Him. There is a similar unjustifiable "hardening" in the passage in which Dean

[1] *Jesus the Nazarene*, p. 263.

Rashdall, in attempting to meet Dr. Denney's criticism of the Abelardian view of the Atonement, suggests that we must choose between the view that Christ's death was due to His own will and the view that it was the natural climax of His life and " was not His act, but the act of the Jewish Priests, the Roman magistrate, and the Roman soldiers." [1] It does not seem to me that we have to choose between these alternatives. It was by our Lord's own free act that He challenged the issue of the trial for blasphemy ; [2] He foresaw the probable end of that trial, and in contemplating the probable end of it saw into the deepest meaning of His Messianic work. Once again the objections seem to me to spring from a desire to ascribe to our Lord the wrong sort of supernaturalism, to hold that He walked according to some rigid plan in which He did not allow for the inevitable contingency of human affairs. That He allowed for this fully, and found in the acceptance of it the Father's guidance to the performance of His work seems to me the most natural interpretation of His mind.

It is otiose to ask what might have been the result if at any stage of His ministry His message had met with the understanding and the response for which He longed. Only this understanding and response on the part of all mankind would have brought the complete fulfilment of His

[1] *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (London, Macmillan, 1919), pp. 450–51.

[2] See below, chap. viii. p. 198.

work. To envisage anything short of this would lead to such questions as whether the conversion of the Jewish people would have led to their "crucifixion" by the rest of the world. And if we think of the whole of mankind as understanding and responding we should have to face the question whether any sort of death for Him would have been necessary for Atonement. But no questions in human history are so profitless as those which arise from the consideration of "what might have been." There is an element of "givenness" which provides the very problem that we have to solve, and our task is to interpret what did as a matter of fact occur. What did actually happen was that our Lord was put to death, and from that death has sprung, as a matter of fact, both the appeal which has won men to understand and respond to His message, and the insight which came to see in that death the ground of our hope of forgiveness. In a similar spirit of accepting and interpreting what was "given" in His human experience we should think of our Lord as going up to Jerusalem and seeing in the necessity laid upon Him of submitting to His Passion and Crucifixion the way whereby He was to fulfil His vocation as the Redeemer of mankind.

The fact that during His last week He slept with His friends at Bethany seems to me insufficient evidence on which to set aside the evidence of those actions of His which show Him as deliberately challenging the issue of the charge of blasphemy, and so running into danger.

There remains the matter of His betrayal. Considerable discussion has been given to the question of what it was that Judas betrayed, and the attempt has been made to show that it was His belief in His Messiahship, which He was trying to keep secret. But here the evidence of His open avowal of His claim during the last week seems far too strong to be set aside, and surely the simple explanation is adequate that the value of Judas' action to the Jewish authorities was that He guided them to a spot where His Master could be found apart from the multitudes who might have taken His part and produced an undesirable riot when the attempt was made to arrest Him.[1]

The last objection that I will consider is one that is raised against the whole attempt to provide such an outline as I have attempted to give in this chapter. It is held that as the available evidence is insufficient to allow of any objective historical arrangement of the events of our Lord's life in chronological order, such arrangements must rest on "psychological" considerations which are highly subjective and have no place in historical study.[2] That they are of this order must be freely admitted; but that they are therefore unjustifiable, or that there are no grounds on which an attempt at such arrangement may hope to arrive at a reasonable degree

[1] An admirable brief account of this incident has recently been published by Dr. E. F. Scott in *The First Age of Christianity* (N.Y., Macmillan, 1926), pp. 77, 78.

[2] *e.g.* A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, p. xx.

of probability, is open to question. The justification of making such attempts lies in the fact that it is impossible to rest content without doing so. The question then arises whether there are any grounds on which a serious student of the Gospel may strive to find one arrangement more probable than another. Any such attempt must be based on an effort to study "the mind of Christ" in relation to the historical conditions of His time. It is the thesis of this book that such an effort can be made with some hope of success, in a spirit that is at once reverent and critical. Whatever claim to acceptance is possessed by the scheme of Christ's life put forward in this chapter rests upon the study of His mind contained in the earlier part of the book. It is confessedly hypothetical; but what its author would say to those who reject it is not "Abandon the attempt" but "Improve upon it."

CHAPTER VIII

The Fourth Gospel

i.

Hitherto we have been concerned with the synoptic Gospels alone. In the present state of New Testament criticism that seems to be the wisest plan to follow in attempting to portray the historic figure of Jesus Christ. But now we must face directly the dilemma which is presented to every such attempt by the existence of the Fourth Gospel. The date, authorship, and character of that Gospel form one of the most disputed questions of theological scholarship. To what extent it is historical, to what extent, indeed, it was ever meant to be historical, are questions on which opinion is divided. The dilemma that results is this. In so far as the Fourth Gospel is not historical, to allow it to influence us in forming our conception of Jesus Christ is to fall into error; but, on the other hand, in so far as it is historical, to ignore it may lead us to a conception so one-sided as to be false to history.

The presupposition of this dilemma is a conviction that the two portraits, the synoptic and the Johannine, are inconsistent with one

another. Our main task in this chapter will be to examine the grounds of this widespread conviction. Though widespread it is not universal, for many a pious Christian has found no difficulty in reading all four Gospels indifferently as portraying his incarnate Lord. But the trouble here is twofold: not only is the eye of faith capable of great blindness to inconsistencies, but it may also be that the harmony is arrived at by reading into the portrait of the synoptic Gospels what I have called the wrong sort of supernaturalism. The problem we have to face is that of the relation between the account of our Lord given in the earlier chapters of this book and that to be found in the Fourth Gospel.

It is not the purpose of this book to deal directly with such questions as the date, authorship, and literary dependance of different documents, but to contribute towards the necessary supplementing of such studies by theological and philosophical inquiry. In dealing with the synoptic Gospels we could omit almost entirely any consideration of those questions of literary criticism. We could gratefully accept the fruit of the labours of scholars in that field, and reflect upon the documents as they came to us from their hands arranged in the probable order of their composition and valued as evidence according to the probable origin of the passages concerned. But in the case of the Fourth Gospel there is no such measure of general agreement as to its date, authorship, and *provenance* on which we may build. The more one studies the

problems that arise the clearer it becomes that in this case the question of the characterisation of our Lord is the point on which the whole matter turns. The objective, historical evidence for date and authorship is ambiguous, and waits for its interpretation upon the interpretation of the author's portrayal of the central Figure of the story. It will be necessary to review as briefly as possible the present state of literary and historical criticism as a preliminary to inquiring what contribution may be made by our method of approach towards an understanding of the Fourth Gospel.

ii.

With regard to the date of the Gospel, there would seem to be a growing agreement that it was written between the years A.D. 80 and 110. The *terminus a quo* is given by the clear indications that the author was familiar with St. Mark's Gospel, which seems to have been written in Rome about the year 67.[1] There are no such indications of familiarity with the other synoptic Gospels, though a number of small agreements with St. Luke in the narrative of the Passion suggest that for that portion of his work the author may have known either that Gospel or one of the sources on which it was based.[2] The *terminus ad quem* depends on the answer to the

[1] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, p. xxx.

[2] *e.g.* the placing of Peter's denial before the violence done to Jesus in the Judgment Hall and the triple vindication by Pilate.

question whether certain passages in Ignatius, the *Didache*, the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Basilides and Valentinus[1] do or do not show that their authors were acquainted with the Fourth Gospel. The inclusion of the Gospel in Tatian's *Diatessaron* (about A.D. 170) is evidence of its widespread acceptance as authoritative by that date, and from the next decade comes the first actual quotation of which we know, written by Theophilus of Antioch about the year 180.[2] To the possible evidence of acquaintanceship on the part of the earlier writers mentioned may be added the fact that all four Gospels are found in all copies of the Syriac and old Latin translations, and these may reasonably be supposed to have been made early in the second century. Although, therefore, no definite *terminus ad quem* can be found before the year 180 it seems probable that the Fourth Gospel, along with the other three, was known and recognised as authoritative early in the second century.

It is when we turn to the question of authorship that the plot thickens. The study of the external evidence concerning "the Johannine tradition" is like reading a detective story in which the clues point in such directly opposite directions that the reader is baffled. On the one hand Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Poly-

[1] *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers.* (Oxford, 1905.) Moffatt: *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1912), pp. 577–82.

[2] *Ad Autolycum*, ii. 14.

crates, and Tertullian[1] all speak definitely of the Apostle John as having lived to old age in Ephesus, and the two first of these ascribe to him the writing of the Gospel. This seems to reflect the generally accepted belief at the end of the second century. But there is also a body of evidence which seems to show that, so far from living to old age in Ephesus and writing a gospel there, the Apostle John never went there at all, but was martyred in Palestine at a comparatively early age. This evidence is furnished chiefly by some fragments of Papias, who lived in the first half of the second century ; and it finds confirmation in a fourth century Syriac Church Calendar, and in the silence as to the residence of St. John in Asia on the part of all Christian literature before Irenæus.[2] It is true that the value of this evidence has been greatly diminished by the criticisms of such scholars as Dr. V. H. Stanton and Lord Charnwood,[3] and the balance of the external evidence seems to be in favour of St. John having lived in Ephesus and having at least had something to do with the publication of the Gospel. But the question is by no means settled and is, indeed, far more complicated than this brief note conveys. There

[1] Eusebius, *H.E.* vi. 14 ; iii. 31 ; Tertullian, *De Praescrip. Haeret.* 32.

[2] For a general review of the problem see Moffatt : *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament.* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1912, pp. 596 ff.)

[3] *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, vol. iii. (Cambridge, 1920) ; *According to St. John* (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1925).

is the puzzle of the relation between the Apostle John and John the Elder, and the possibility of the memories of the two—if, indeed, there were two—having been confused in the early Church. The conclusion seems to be that the external evidence concerning the authorship is confusing, and does not in any way dictate to us the view which we are to hold of the contents of the book.

The traditional view has been to ascribe the Gospel to the Apostle St. John, the son of Zebedee. That this view should have prevailed is hardly surprising, seeing that alone of all the Gospels the Fourth contains within it the statement of its authorship.[1] This statement identifies the author with that follower of our Lord who throughout the Gospel is referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and it seems almost certain that the figure intended by that phrase must have been St. John.[2] But it is very doubtful whether the last chapter, in which this statement occurs, was part of the original Gospel, and if it is an appendix of later authorship the assertion may have been mistaken. If, however, we look for other indications of the author's character within the Gospel a number of points seem to emerge. The picture of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion which is given is

[1] John xxi. 24.

[2] On this see Charnwood, *op. cit.* For the distinction between "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and other anonymous disciples see Stanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–39. For another interpretation of "the Beloved Disciple" see W. Sanday's discussion of Delff's theory in *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (New York, 1905), pp. 97 ff.

a description of Judaism as it existed before, and not after, the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and it is given quite naturally, as though by one who had been familiar with it.[1] Moreover, the author seems to have had personal knowledge of the geography of Palestine and, in particular, of Jerusalem. The geographical references, like the references to Jewish customs, do not read like acquired knowledge but like the casual allusions made by one who was familiar with the places of which he speaks. Thirdly, the language of the Gospel must be considered. It is written in Greek, but in very curious Greek. Dr. Burney, indeed, claims to have proved that it was originally written in Aramaic, and that the Gospel as we have it is a very early Greek translation of the lost original.[2] While this is more than doubtful,[3] Dr. Burney's work does seem to have established the fact that the author was one who thought in Aramaic while he wrote in Greek, one whose native language was Aramaic but who had acquired a knowledge of Greek as a secondary language.[4]

[1] On this point see the evidence collected by Dr. J. A. McClymont in his Commentary in the *Century Bible* (Revised Edition, Edinburgh, 1922, pp. 20 ff.).

[2] *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford University Press, 1922).

[3] See *e.g.* the criticism of Dr. Burney's thesis by G. R. Driver in *The Jewish Guardian*, Jan. 5 and 12, 1923.

[4] A few years ago I had to read a thesis written in English by a Welsh student which provided an instructive parallel to this. While the meaning of what he had written was quite clear, the language in which it was expressed was unlike any

To this brief discussion of the problems of date and authorship we must add a note on the order of events as presented in the synoptic Gospels and in the Fourth Gospel. At first sight the two traditions present a glaring discrepancy, but, as Dr. Stanton and others have pointed out,[1] careful examination tends to diminish the inconsistencies. In view of the "sketchiness" of all the material available for the reconstruction of the course of our Lord's ministry,[2] it is difficult to assert that there are no gaps in the synoptic outline into which events peculiar to the Fourth Gospel could be fitted. The main difference is, of course, the fact that in the Fourth Gospel our Lord pays three or four visits to Jerusalem before the last week of His life, of which there is no mention in the synoptic Gospels. But it is becoming generally recognised that there are passages in those Gospels which presuppose that the last visit was not the first.[3] Dr. Stanton's work suggests a possible interweaving of the two traditions somewhat as follows. If we take together at their face value St. Mark's statement that our Lord began to preach in Galilee after John the Baptist had been imprisoned [4] and the note of time, "John was not yet cast into

other English I have ever seen. In conversation with the writer I ascertained that the syntactical order of the words was that in which he would naturally have expressed himself in Welsh, and that he had only learned to speak English in his 'teens.

[1] V. H. Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 220 ff.

[2] See above, chap. vii. p. 142.

[3] See Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 230 ff.

[4] Mk. i. 14.

prison," in St. John iii. 24, then the point at which the fourth evangelist begins to "overlap" the synoptic account is St. John iv. 43.[1] At St. John vii. 10 He leaves Galilee never to return, and the rest of the Gospel before the last week is an elaboration of the phrase in St. Mark x. 1: "And he cometh into the coasts of Judæa . . . and the people resort unto him again." As a matter of fact, for the reasons given in the last chapter, it is probably useless to try to reconstruct in detail any account of the course of our Lord's ministry.[2] But it does look as though the aim of the author of the Fourth Gospel was to supplement the Marcan account, which had been mainly concerned with the Galilean ministry, by narrating incidents of a Judaean

[1] The disproportion between the number of events recorded and the time covered forbids us from assuming that the narrative of Mk. i. allows no such insertion of the earlier material in John. One may perhaps suggest as a parallel the narrative in Acts ix. No one would suspect from that chapter that three years elapsed between St. Paul's conversion and his first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian, which, however, is necessitated by Gal. i. 17, 18.

[2] Above, pp. 142 ff. Attractive as is Dr. Stanton's reconciliation of the two chronological schemes, it seems to me to be open to the same criticism as Professor Burkitt's exposition of the Marcan outline (see above, chap. vii. p. 162), *i.e.* that it attempts to do something for which there is not sufficient evidence available. It is valuable, nevertheless, as helping to break down the position which holds that the two traditions are hopelessly irreconcilable.

I may perhaps be permitted to insert here a note on Dr. Stanton's discussion of St. John iv. 44 (*op. cit.*, p. 236). Dr. Stanton finds great difficulty in that verse, assuming that it was meant to give our Lord's reason for leaving Judaea and going into Galilee. But it seems possible to take it as the author's comment on the fact that our Lord did preach in Galilee, of which he is about to give a brief account. On this view the difficulty disappears.

ministry omitted therein. To this end he has compressed the account of the Galilean ministry into the passage from iv. 43 to vii. 10, and given his attention to events which he places before and after that brief summary.

But more and more it seems to be becoming clear that, for want of evidence, any attempt at reconstruction of the chronology of the events of our Lord's life is doomed to failure. Moreover, why should we assume that chronological considerations governed the writer of the Fourth Gospel any more than that of the First ? When this question has once been raised the attractiveness of the hypothesis put forward by Dr. B. W. Bacon cannot be denied.[1] He suggests that the author, while working with the Marcan outline as his basis, has " considerably obscured " that outline by a " secondary scheme based upon the idea that Jesus attended the great religious feasts of Judaism at Jerusalem. Each occasion of the kind is then used by the evangelist to bring out their higher significance by word and miracle." The great merit of this theory is that it does adequately summarise and assimilate the actual facts which give rise to the problem. The obvious signs of familiarity with the Marcan outline, the no less obvious discrepancies, the series of events in connection with visits to Jerusalem at times of festival, the regular scheme in accordance with which in each case some striking incident is made, as it were, the " text "

[1] *Jesus and Paul* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1921), pp. 217 ff.

of a succeeding discourse—all these facts are taken into account and reveal the probability of Dr. Bacon's conclusion : " The fact that the entire public ministry is presented in the form of scenes at five great religious feasts, Passover, Pentecost, Unleavened Bread, Tabernacles and Dedication, for all but one of which Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, reminds us of the five discourses of Matthew, and shows how artistically the evangelist arranges his material. For on each occasion he describes a single mighty work of Jesus, symbolical of the religious significance of the feast in question ; and this is accompanied by a discourse approximating in form the Platonic dialogue, a form which had become classic for religious and philosophic teaching."

But in superimposing this " secondary scheme," how much historical ground had the author for " the idea that Jesus attended the great religious feasts at Jerusalem " ? Beyond the general probability of His having done so as a faithful Jew, and the special probability of the synoptic Gospels having omitted to mention at least one visit to Jerusalem previous to the last,[1] we have no grounds on which to answer this question. And if we ask whether the incidents leading up to the discourses actually occurred, we are again in darkness. If we assume that they did, we have to explain the complete absence in the synoptic Gospels of any mention of some of the most striking of them. If we assume that they did not, we have to account

[1] See above, p. 177.

for their appearance in the Fourth Gospel. In order to do this there is no need to credit the author with permitting himself a great liberty of free invention of miracle stories in order to set forth his message. Doubtless He was dependent on traditions and sources of information current in his day which he used together with the Marcan outline; and it may be that it is now quite impossible to recover the exact form of the incidents which reached him as the narrative of the Pool of Bethesda and the raising of Lazarus.

Moreover, though agreeing with Dr. Bacon as to the substantial agreement between the author of the Fourth Gospel and St. Paul as to their theological outlook, I am not convinced that the discourses he recounts are simply the expression of that author's own developed theology, and do not contain a great deal of material giving insight into the mind of our Lord on earth. The question whether this material can be disentangled must next be discussed.

But first it may be well to summarise the points already raised.

1. It is reasonable to assign the writing of the Gospel to a date between A.D. 80 and about 110, and it seems to have been well known and accepted in the Christian Church from early in the second century. [1]

[1] As the question of precisely how early cannot be settled by definite external evidence, our conclusions as to the characterisation of our Lord in the Gospel will have a bearing on the question of probability here involved.

2. With regard to authorship :

(*a*) A strong tradition maintains that it was the work of St. John the son of Zebedee, written by him in Ephesus. Apart from the statement in chapter xxi. of the Gospel itself this tradition is first found in Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

(*b*) There are said to be traces of an earlier tradition according to which St. John was martyred early in Jerusalem and so could not have been the author.

(*c*) The Gospel itself bears evidence of having been written by a Palestinian Jew who had known Palestine and Jerusalem before A.D. 70 ; and the appendix to the Gospel states that this author was the disciple who lay on our Lord's breast at the Last Supper.

3. When the events in the two traditions are compared, it is not impossible to hold that the Fourth Gospel was written in order to supplement the Marcan account by the addition of material available to the author derived from other sources. But it is not possible with any certainty to interweave the events of the two traditions in any detailed chronological or " biographical " scheme ; and there remain historical problems to which no satisfactory answer can be given.

The very inadequate discussion of these three points, of which this is the summary, has been given in order to show that on all these counts,

when the question of the historicity of the Fourth Gospel is raised, the verdict, apart from a consideration of the characterisation of our Lord in that Gospel, must be "*Non liquet.*" We are therefore free to approach the subject of that characterisation with an open mind.

iii.

No one can read a few chapters from one of the synoptic Gospels and then a few chapters from the Fourth Gospel without being sensible of a change of "atmosphere." We seem, as it were, to be moving in another world. To what is this due? Is it merely due to the fact that we are turning from conscientious compilations to the unified recollections of an eye-witness, as the traditional view would hold? Or is it comparable to the contrast between an official biography of Queen Victoria and Mr. Lytton Strachey's treatment of the same theme, as some "mediating" views would suggest? Or are the two portraits of the central Figure so inconsistent that we must choose between them in searching for the historic Christ?

The views which would lead to this last conclusion are commonly held to be due to the influence of F. C. Baur, who maintained that the Prologue, which proclaims the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Divine Logos, controls the presentation of our Lord in the rest of the book. Thus Dr. Stanton, at the beginning of his volume, states that although the grounds on which Baur

rested his theory have crumbled away before criticism, his general view still forms the uncriticised assumption which governs the minds of scholars as they study the book.[1] But it is doubtful whether Baur alone should bear the brunt of this charge. His influence would probably not have had the weight ascribed to it were it not for the fact that it springs from a belief which he shares with the most unlikely associates, the multitude of faithful Christians whose point of view we referred to in an earlier chapter as that of uncritical piety.[2] The view that in the Fourth Gospel the divinity of Christ shines patently through His human life was not invented by Baur, and does not depend on his theory of the relation of the Prologue to the rest of the book. It has been the common faith of Christian believers, and is assumed uncriticised by nearly all students of the Gospel. It appears in a popular attempt at a modified conservatism which suggests that the author, having for many years lived in communion with his risen Lord, could not disentangle what he was learning from his Master day by day from what he had seen of Him and heard Him say in the flesh many years back.[3] Attention would be called, it is true, to the fact that there are passages in the Fourth Gospel which definitely assert the humanity of Christ, such as the statements that

[1] *op. cit.* chap. i.

[2] Above, chap. ii. p. 23 ; chap. iv. p. 52.

[3] *e.g.* in *The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel*, by H. Scott Holland (London, 1920).

He was tired, and wept.[1] But these assertions of humanity seem, somehow, to remain as excrescences to the general portrayal of the character of our Lord; they are, as it were, concessions to the facts of history, or to the demands of the doctrine of the Incarnation, elements not wholly assimilated in a unified conception of the personality of our Lord. The general impression to be gained from the Gospel is that of One who was clearly divine, and thought and spoke of Himself as such.

It is this view as a whole, in which the followers of Baur and the pious faithful agree, that I desire to challenge. To my mind the difficulties which we find in comparing the portrayal of our Lord in the Fourth Gospel with that in the Synoptists are difficulties which are not so much provided by that book itself as read into it by ourselves in approaching it with the uncriticised assumption, inherited from our Christian ancestors, that it presents Him as overwhelmingly divine. What is needed is to free our minds from these assumptions, and to approach the Fourth Gospel along the same lines of thought with which, in the earlier chapters of this book, we have studied the Synoptists. That is to say, we take as our principle of interpretation the canon that we are dealing with One who was living as man in mind as in body, One to whom the materials on which His mind was exercised were presented to Him through the normal channels of human apprehension.[2] Only

[1] John iv. 6; xi. 35.

[2] See above, chaps. ii. and iii.

we may now make use of the results of our investigation of the synoptic Gospels. We need not begin again from the beginning with an entirely open mind as to the character of our Lord. The problem being that of the relation between the portrayals in the two traditions, we may start with the thought of our Lord as we have found Him revealed in the Synoptists and try to see how He appears in the pages of the Fourth Gospel.

The only way to do this properly, of course, is to read slowly through the whole Gospel with this end in view, meditating on each passage in turn, and trying to understand the thought of our Lord in each situation as it occurs. There is no space for that here; it would mean writing a commentary on the Gospel rather than a single chapter in a book intended as an introduction to Gospel study. All I can do is to commend this method of approach to my readers, and to set forth certain specimens of exegesis which arise from my own attempt at such a study, an attempt which has brought me to the conviction that the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is the most consistently and (if I may use the word) "staggeringly" human of all the portraits of Him in the New Testament.[1]

[1] It may here be noted that the point of view which contrasted crudely the "human Jesus" of the Synoptists with the "divine Christ" of St. John is being gradually modified by the further study of the Synoptists. See, *e.g.*, A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, pp. l–liv., and Paul Elmer More, *The Christ of the New Testament* (Princeton University Press 1924), pp. 235 ff.

There is, of course, no doubt that the author of the Gospel himself believed in the divinity of our Lord. The Prologue does represent his own deepest convictions. The question is whether these convictions led him to falsify history, so that the rest of the book is to be taken as an extended commentary on the Prologue. The more probable view, to my mind, is that the Prologue was merely an introduction to the succeeding narrative, and possibly represents his use of an idea with which he only became familiar long after he had become accustomed to think and teach on the lines of the rest of the Gospel.[1] In the language of a certain school of educationists it is a "point of contact." The author was writing for educated men of the Greek world, among whom the idea of the Logos was a matter of common interest, much as the idea of evolution was recently among us.[2] He used it to catch their ear and, incidentally, to make clear his own belief about our Lord. "This Logos," he says, "about whom you are all talking, He was with God and is Himself God; moreover, He became flesh," and then follows the story of the days of His flesh. From time to time he will insert comments in agree-

[1] For this suggestion see Stanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 178–9.

[2] I owe this illustration to J. Drummond, *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), p. 24; cp. pp. 418–9. That the author of the Gospel himself held any clearly formulated "Logos doctrine" seems to me very doubtful. If he did, there is not sufficient evidence to discover what it was. There is no more reason to suppose that he must have held one than to suppose that every one who believes generally in evolution must be a

ment with the Prologue ; [1] but his main interest, now that he has caught the ear of his audience and made clear his own belief, is with the human life on earth of his Lord.

It is commonly thought that these comments are so closely interwoven with the structure of the narrative and the reports of the discourses that it is impossible at this late date to disentangle them. While there is a measure of truth in this—the absence of any inverted commas in ancient manuscripts makes it inevitable—I do not think the problem is as desperate as is often imagined. It arises just as much from the misreading into our Lord's words of meanings He did not intend as from the absence of inverted commas, that misreading which this chapter is intended to question. No doubt there will always remain a number of passages where it is difficult to draw the line, and different readers will draw it in different

Lamarckian or a Neo-Darwinian. In particular, the attempt to represent him as a disciple of Philo seems to me to break down on the ground that the cornerstone of Philo's system is the "unknowableness" of God, whereas in the Fourth Gospel God is made known in Christ: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." See my *Place of Reason in Christian Apologetic* (Oxford and New York, 1925), p. 37. As Dr. Drummond points out, the fact that the Logos idea owed its currency to Philo no more requires us to believe that everyone who thought and spoke of it had studied his works than the use of the word "evolution" implies that the speaker himself has read Darwin. The form of the Prologue seems to me to be sufficiently explained by the view that it is an expansion of the opening passage of St. Mark. In view of this probability, Lord Charnwood's exposition of it as a skilful literary device (*op. cit.*, p. 61) seems unnecessary.

[1] *e.g.* ii. 11, 21, 24 ; iii. 13–21, 31–36, etc.

places.[1] But I hope it will become clear from what follows that it is possible by the application of our canon of interpretation to recover a great deal more of our Lord's actual teaching than is sometimes supposed.

It is now time to present specimens of the exegesis on which the view of the Gospel maintained in this chapter is based. The first passages to be considered will be some which at first sight lend colour to the opposite view, and these will be followed by others in which the character of our Lord is further revealed.

In viii. 56–58 and xvii. 5 our Lord is represented as speaking of His own pre-existence. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; . . . Before Abraham was, I am." "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." If the synoptic Christ were indeed simply an ethical teacher who made no supernatural claims, then indeed these sayings would be out of keeping with His character as there revealed. But we have seen that this is not the case. At the heart of His thought was the conviction of His Messiahship and imbedded in that conviction was the thought of the Enochian Son of Man who "before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heaven were made . . . was named before the

[1] A fairly clear instance, to my mind, is provided by the conversation with Nicodemus, where I hold that the author intended our Lord's words to end with verse 12 of chap. iii. The rest is his own comment.

Lord of Spirits;" who "hath been chosen and hidden before Him before the creation of the world and for evermore."[1] What is needed is to bring to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel those same canons of interpretation as are applied to the Synoptists. Even a deluded fanatic who had got it into his head that he was the Messiah might have used of himself the language here ascribed to our Lord. Read in the light of the traditions of His people current at His time, and given His own conviction of Messiahship, there is nothing in these words out of keeping with His character or inconsistent with His true humanity.

In x. 30 is the saying: "I and the Father are One." Of all the sayings in the Gospel, this illustrates most clearly what I call the misreading into the words of the text of meanings they were never meant to convey. We grow up from childhood accustomed to regard this saying as an assertion of the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, of the "homoousianism" which came to be the official teaching of the Church. It is hard to rid our mind of these associations, especially if we believe (as I do myself) in the truth of that doctrine. But, nevertheless, it must be done. The simple and natural interpretation of the words is to take them as witnessing to our Lord's consciousness of that inner union with the Father which was at the heart of His human life. This becomes clear if the saying is read in its context. Our Lord has been protesting that

[1] Enoch xlviii. Cp. lxi.

He does His works in His Father's name, and that those who follow Him have been given to Him by the Father who can be trusted to preserve them. Then He ends with this assertion that He is one with the Father. The Jews, it is true, are then said to have attacked Him for blasphemy, but our Lord's reply is a deliberate repudiation of any definite claim to godhead, combined with a reassertion of His certainty that His works are the expression of His Father's will. It is on His inner certainty of this fact that He takes His stand.

In a similar connection earlier in this book I argued that if our discussion were concerned with any other than Jesus Christ, I did not think that the truth of the suggestions there put forward would be questioned.[1] That line of argument is again in place here. The existence of men of God, conscious of their devotion to His will and of moments of union with Him, is too well established a fact of human history to us to fail to recognise an instance of that outlook here. It is the fear of assimilating our Lord to other men in this way, a reverent repugnance to any attempt to " classify " Him, which leads us to repudiate this interpretation of His words. But that fear is groundless. Strive as we might, no type or class of man would be sufficient to confine the Person of our Lord. But to recognise in Him One who as man lived continuously at that level of communion with His Father to which the saints sometimes at

[1] Above, chap. iii. p. 35.

odd moments attain, and who spoke of what He knew, is surely a justifiable manner of interpreting these words of His.

At this point we may notice the incident in iv. 17, 18, where Christ is credited with miraculous knowledge of the marital relationships of the Samaritan woman whom He meets by the well at Sychar. I am not prepared to fight to the last ditch for the historicity of this detail or that incident. It may possibly be one of those products of pious imagination which has somehow strayed from its proper home in an apocryphal Gospel into its present place.[1] But neither am I sure that it can be summarily set aside. In His manhood our Lord was born and lived as a Jew, an Oriental in the ancient world. Still, to-day, in India and elsewhere in the East, such insight into another person's mind does not seem to be beyond human power. At first sight this suggestion seems even more irreverent than the last. It is not merely attempting to "classify" our Lord; it is attempting to classify Him as belonging to a type of mind which to us of the Western world is by no means ideal. And yet—is it certain that our devotion to rationalistic methods of thought, which has led to our distrust and disuse of such practice, has sacrificed nothing but what was valueless and derogatory to the dignity of man?[2] And

[1] See above, chap. vi. p. 118.

[2] If any reader is inclined to condemn me on a charge of blasphemy for this suggestion, I would ask him to suspend judgment until he has read the first essay in Edwyn Bevan: *Hellenism and Christianity* (London, 1921).

in any case our Lord was, after the flesh, an Oriental of the ancient world, and as a matter of historical criticism it seems to me that this suggestion should be weighed before the incident is allowed to count as a point against the historical value of the Gospel in which it is found.

Further on in this account of His conversation with the woman of Samaria our Lord openly states His belief in His Messiahship. That He thought of Himself as Messiah throughout the whole of His ministry we have seen reason to believe; but the synoptic evidence is against any public declaration in the early days.[1] Can we, however, entirely rule out the possibility that on some occasions He broached the subject—experimentally as it were—in conversation with individuals? Is it not conceivable that just as the cry of the anguished father could break through His reserve in the exercise of His healing powers[2] so the need of a human soul could break through His self-imposed restraint and draw from Him a simple statement of the truth? It is not impossible; but neither is it impossible that here we have an incident in which the actual events have been coloured in tradition by the influence of ideas of "what must have happened." The choice would seem to lie between these two possibilities.

It is worth noticing that there are a number of passages in the Fourth Gospel in which the people of Palestine are represented as being in a state of bewilderment as to whether our Lord

[1] See above, chap. vii. pp. 149 ff. [2] iv. 49, 50.

were Messiah or no.[1] How far do these reflect what ever actually occurred? To have concluded from the synoptic outline that He made no open claim to Messiahship does not prove that His own convictions were never suspected by His audience. There is little evidence either way in the synoptic Gospels, though the incident of the coming of St. John Baptist's messengers to ask "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"[2] is possibly significant. In the situation, as depicted in the earlier Gospels, we find Jesus Christ convinced of His Messiahship striving to educate the multitudes in the knowledge of God as a preparation for the setting up of the Kingdom of God. After a while He concentrates on the education of a smaller body of disciples, and it is clear from what happened at Cæsarea Philippi that among other things he had been aiming at preparing the way for a declaration of His own claims. I must confess that both the occasional disclosure in advance to individuals and the growth of suspicion and rumour as to His own beliefs seem to me well within the range of probability, and that our Lord may have had to face, and possibly to parry, questions which He could not satisfactorily answer without prejudicing His whole work. But of this more will be said below.[3]

I come now to three passages which I wish to consider together. In vi. 15, after the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Fourth Gospel reads,

[1] *e.g.* vii. 26, 27, 40, 42; x. 19–21, 24.
[2] Mt. xi. 2–6; Lk. vii. 18–23.
[3] pp. 203 ff.

" When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." This verse has been taken as showing the " deifying " tendency of the author. At the parallel point in the Marcan narrative (vi. 46) Jesus goes away to pray. For the author of the Fourth Gospel He does not need to pray, and so another motive is substituted, and that one which is inconsistent with the synoptic tradition in which there is no trace of any desire on the part of the multitude " to make Him a king." [1] In viii. 20, we read, " no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come." Here, again, at first sight we have a " dogmatic " rendering of the story. In the Synoptists our Lord's ministry develops " naturally " in accordance with the flow of human events. But by the time the Fourth Gospel was written it was thought of as divinely controlled from on high. Thirdly, in x. 18 Jesus says, " no man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself." [2] This, at first sight, seems to be an attempt to heighten our sense of His majesty by showing that His death was not imposed upon Him by His enemies but was within His own power to accept or refuse.[3]

But now let us try to understand these passages in the light of the sketch of our Lord's

[1] See Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, second edition, 1912), p. 526.

[2] The rest of this verse, and the verse preceding, are discussed below.

[3] Moffatt, *loc. cit.*

ministry drawn from the synoptic Gospels and outlined in the last chapter. We found there the picture of One who was convinced that He was the expected Messiah, but who knew that He was called to minister to a people who would fail to understand Him, an audience which could see and applaud the miracle in a work of healing, but would fail to see that its only value lay in the love which it expressed. So He set Himself to the task of their education, and after a while found Himself driven to devote Himself more exclusively to the training of a small body of more promising disciples. It was not, however, that He had failed to achieve popularity; the multitudes hung upon Him and followed Him into the desert when He tried to escape from them. But it was popularity *of the wrong sort.* It may only have been here and there that anyone suspected Him of being, or claiming to be, Messiah; there may not have been any overt move "to make Him a king," but He may well have been conscious that He was in danger of being forced into a leadership based on a misunderstanding, the leadership of those who followed Him, not because they shared His knowledge of the Father and devotion to the Father's will, but because they saw in Him a miracle-worker who might turn out to be, if not the Messiah they were looking for, at any rate his prophet and forerunner. He saw the danger and stepped aside before it came to a head. Before there was any move "to make Him a king" He saw that such a move would

inevitably come, and would be fatal to His work, unless He took steps to avoid it. If one may attempt reverently to paraphrase His thoughts, one might imagine Him as thinking, "I am being forced into a false position. I must get out of this." Guided by such thoughts He sought communion with the Father in a night of prayer upon the mountain, and made the decision which issued in the "second period" of His ministry, the period of retirement in which the disciples were to be trained to carry on after He was gone.[1]

It was essential to the fulfilment of His work in this second period that He should avoid capture until the disciples were ready to be left. In this fact, surely, we may find the true interpretation of the other two passages we are considering. They are both strictly and literally true. "No man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come." How was this? Not because the Father was directing His life after the manner of a celestial chess-player moving his pieces, but because in His daily waiting upon the Father's will He knew that the time had not yet come to leave His disciples to themselves. "My hour is not yet come," He thought; and so He avoided capture, just as at Nazareth He had escaped from the crowd who sought to throw Him down the precipice.[2] But when at

[1] An illustration of the necessity imposed upon a preacher with a message to maintain a strict economy in the exercise of gifts of healing may be found in *The Message of Sadhu Sundar Singh*, by Streeter and Appasamy (N.Y., Macmillan, 1921), p. 32.

[2] Lk. iv. 28–30. See above, p. 156.

last the hour struck, He was ready for it, and went up to Jerusalem to challenge the issue. "I lay down my life of myself," He said, and said truly. So long as He remained living quietly in retirement with His friends He might be left in peace. But always He was waiting for the time when He must put an end to that peace; and when He saw that the time was come He went up to Jerusalem under no illusion as to what He must do and suffer. It is interesting to note that in xvii. 4, where He is represented as saying in prayer to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," this "work" is explained as being the training of the disciples, and His prayer is a prayer that they may be kept faithful after He has gone.

The more one studies the Fourth Gospel on these lines the more curious it appears that the portrayal of our Lord in it should be thought to be one in which His humanity is minimised and emphasis laid on His own personal claims to divinity. Of all the Gospels it is the one in which the keynote of our Lord's thought is *dependence*, dependence on the Father.[1] Such claims as He does make on His own behalf arise out of this sense of dependence. They are rooted in His conviction of His Messiahship, and in His inner knowledge that He is entirely consecrated to the doing of the Father's will and that He knows what is the Father's mind and the Father's will. But there is nothing that passes beyond such knowledge of the Father's mind and will as

[1] See *e.g.* iv. 34; v. 19–29; vi. 27–46; vii. 16–18; xi. 41, 42.

we have seen to have been open to Him in His manhood, and to have been recorded in the synoptic Gospels.[1] This is especially clear in the accounts of the miracles in the Fourth Gospel. It is true that where the Synoptists speak of these as "mighty works"[2] the author of the Fourth Gospel calls them "signs,"[3] and seems to regard them as evidences of our Lord's superhuman dignity. This natural and almost inevitable judgment of the Christian writer[4] must not, however, blind us to the fact that this view does not appear as representing the prevailing thought of our Lord Himself in the Gospel. This is a point where the distinction between the mind of Christ and the author's comment can be, and should be, most clearly distinguished. It is by the Father's power, made His own to use through the communion of prayer, that the mighty works are wrought,[5] and our Lord sets little store on the faith in Him which comes from witnessing miracles. When in iv. 46–53 a nobleman comes to Him to ask Him to heal his son, His growing realisation of the futility of miracles to proclaim His message is expressed in the words, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." It is not to a nobleman asking a sign, but in response to the human cry of a father in distress, that He says, "Go thy way; thy son liveth."[6]

[1] See above, chaps. ii. and iii. and especially the discussion of Mt. xi. 25–27; Lk. x. 21, 22, on pp. 40 ff.

[2] δυνάμεις. [3] σημεῖα. [4] See above, chap. vi. pp. 111, 116.

[5] *e.g.* v. 19, 30; vi. 57; x. 25–39.

[6] Cp. Mt. xii. 39; Lk. xi. 29.

In viii. 40 our Lord speaks of Himself as "a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." It is surely incredible that such a phrase should have been invented by the author of a gospel intended to set forth a "deified" picture of Jesus Christ. Only if He had actually used them could they have remained in the record. Only if He had actually used them would a devout Christian, such as the author of the Fourth Gospel clearly was, have dared to put them into His mouth. But the next example is yet more striking; it is, indeed, the climax of all the passages in the Gospels which reveal the humanity of our Saviour. In x. 17 He says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." There is no getting away from the plain meaning of the verse. It represents the Father's love for the Son as conditional on His fulfilling His vocation. But the thought of the love of the Father for the Son as being in any sense conditional is beyond Christian imagination. Only, in silent and wondering reverence, we can listen to the words as spoken by our Lord. He knew Himself to be the Messiah, called as the Suffering Servant to "give His life a ransom for many," and so to pass through death to the glory of the Son of Man. Only as He was faithful to that vocation could He enjoy the Father's love. It is the Christ of the synoptic Gospels who speaks, and we can accept these words as His, but the only fitting comment is to bow the head in silent wonder and adoration.

There remain to be considered a number of passages which have caused great difficulty to readers of the Gospel, those in which our Lord is represented as carrying on long and passionate disputes with "the Jews."[1] These difficulties have been found by two classes of readers. Historical students have seen in them incidents of which no hint is given in the synoptic Gospels, and which, indeed, seem so far removed from the kind of teaching characteristic of the synoptic Christ as to cast doubts on their genuineness. And pious readers, untroubled by these questions of historical criticism, have been disquieted partly by the apparently rambling inconclusiveness of many of the arguments, and still more by the harshness of our Lord's tone towards those whom He is addressing.

There is no doubt that in his use of the term "the Jews" for the opponents of Christ the author of the Fourth Gospel reflects the situation of his own day, and not that of the time of which he is writing. By the time at which he wrote the Christian Church had become separated out from its Jewish mother, and had among its fiercest opponents "the Jews." But there is no ground for thinking that during the ministry of Christ in Palestine there was any such corporate hostility, until the last days. This has led to the suggestion that these passages record not actual occurrences in the life of our Lord but the strife of the early Church read back into the Gospel story.

[1] See v. 9–47 ; vi. 41–58 ; vii. 14–24 ; viii. 12–58 ; x. 23–39.

But it is also possible that in his account of the actual occurrences in the life of Christ the author has slipped into the use of a convenient, though inaccurate, term to describe those with whom our Lord strove in the days of His flesh. We have seen that it is impossible to maintain that the synoptic Gospels give so complete an account of His ministry as to leave no room for other incidents; and other explanations of the "argumentative" form of these discussions are possible than that they are the free inventions of a later age. No doubt these passages, like the rest of the Gospel, owe a great deal of their form to the literary genius of the author. The comparison suggested above between an official life of Queen Victoria and the work of Mr. Lytton Strachey is here pertinent and, moreover, we are not concerned to argue that these passages contain verbatim accounts of the disputes recorded. The question we have to face is whether these incidents are such as would arise naturally in the course of the synoptic story, and whether the character of our Lord, as He appears in them, is recognisable as that of the synoptic Christ.

Let us "set the stage" for them by drawing upon our study of the synoptic Gospels in the earlier chapters of this book. Once again let us remind ourselves of the contrast between the mind of Christ and the minds of those among whom He came to live and work. He was convinced of His Messiahship, and that this meant a call to proclaim the righteousness and love of

the Father, to show them forth in His life, and to summon men to share His devotion to those ends. His clear knowledge of the Father's nature was to Him the one certainty of life, and when He turned to the pages of the Old Testament He found, piercing through the medium of human scribe and prophet, the message of the Father He knew. But it was not so with His hearers. The trouble with them was that their views of God were distorted. It was not of righteousness and love, but of power and glory—and of a power and glory which belonged in a special way to the Jewish race—that they thought when they thought of God. The result was a deadlock. He might speak; but they could not understand. Because they did not know the Father they could not find in Him the Father's representative.

Under these circumstances, what could He do? There was one thing, we have seen, that He could and did do. He could give His life on behalf of those whom His words could not reach. Moreover, there were some who had "ears to hear," and these He could train to carry on His work in the world when He was gone. This, too, He did. But suppose that from time to time He felt constrained to make another effort to reach those who seemed so deaf to His message.[1] Would not the result have been just such arguments as we find in the Fourth Gospel?

We have spoken of the appearance of rambling

[1] Compare in the synoptic Gospels the sending out of the disciples to preach. See above, chap. iv. p. 74.

inconclusiveness given by some of these arguments. The same kind of impression is conveyed by the statement that "in the Fourth Gospel Christ never seems to give a straight answer to a straight question." Under these circumstances how could He? And how could the course of the argument be other than tortuous and inconclusive? Take, for example, x. 24–38. "The Jews" here ask Him straight out, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." What could He say? If He said, "Yes, I am," they would either misunderstand Him as claiming a Messiahship of a kind to which He did not aspire, or precipitate the crisis for which "His hour was not yet come." But if He said "No, I am not," it would not be true. So He does the one thing possible. He seeks to remove the obstacle which lies in the way of their recognition of the truth. He tries to make them face the fact that it is because they do not know the Father that they cannot recognise the Father's representative in Him.[1] And if there is a note of harshness in His voice, as when in a similar argument He says "Ye are of your father the devil,"[2] may we not see in that a desperate attempt to pierce through the wall of misunderstanding? Because He loves so deeply those whom He addresses He will go to that length in His endeavour to pierce them to the quick, to sting them into some

[1] With this compare the emphasis on "the single eye" as the one thing needful in Mt. vi. 22–23; Lk. xi. 34–36.

[2] viii. 44.

realisation of the blindness which keeps them from the truth.

Here, once more, it is the ascription to our Lord on earth of the wrong sort of supernaturalism which stands in the way of finding the true interpretation of the Gospel. We are accustomed to think of Him as endowed with powers which saved Him from the hindrances and trials of the preacher who tries to proclaim to mankind the righteousness and love of God. We think of Him as having such complete control of the circumstances in which He moved that it is hard to think of Him as having to use passionate appeals and stinging shafts in order to try to bring His message home, and as finding His efforts vain when every expedient had been tried. But there is no evidence for such a supernaturalism in any of the Gospels, least of all in the Fourth Gospel.[1] For me, at any rate, the prevailing impression left on my mind by that book is of a Man with His back against the wall faced by a multitude of men who cannot understand what He says, who is striving to speak His message home to those whom He cannot reach, while for Himself He holds firmly to the path marked out for Him to walk in by the Father's will. It is a picture overwhelmingly and "staggeringly" human of Him in whom I recognise and worship my God.

[1] See above, chap. vi. p. 139.

iv.

I have not attempted in this chapter to deal with such questions as the literary form and structure of the Fourth Gospel, nor do I intend to do so. Whether it has any better claim than the Synoptists to provide a trustworthy chronological framework for a reconstruction of the course of events in the ministry of our Lord is a question which I prefer to leave to those better qualified to discuss such matters. All I wish to do is to suggest, on the basis of the arguments in the earlier chapters of this book, an approach to the study of the character of our Lord as depicted in this Gospel, to which such questions are, within certain limits, irrelevant. Some views of the Gospel are undoubtedly excluded by what I have said, such as those which hold that it was never meant to be anything but an elaborately constructed allegory with no historical content,[1] or (still more) those which maintain that it contains a hidden *gnosis* which is to be discovered by a mathematical calculation of the numerical value of the letters of which its words are composed. Such methods of composition as this last theory presupposes do not produce great literature, and what I have said about the Gospel has made it clear that to me it contains far more simple and straightforward history than is often allowed. But within the limits neces-

[1] On this point see Charnwood, *According to St. John*, pp. 70 ff., and the discussion of Clement of Alexandria's phrase "Spiritual Gospel" in Gore, *Epistles of St. John* (London, 1920), pp. 36 ff.

sitated by the interpretation I have suggested there is room for great variety of opinion on the question of the order of events, and on that of the extent to which the author has cast his material in a form dictated by the æsthetic requirements of literary style.

It remains for me to try to state briefly the way in which I have come to view the book as a whole. It will have been noticed that one striking fact has emerged from the interpretations of the passages treated in the preceding section. In every case the Fourth Gospel has been found to give the facts of our Lord's life as they appeared to His own mind. It gives us, as it were, the inside of the synoptic portrait. I can, perhaps, best explain my view by an analogy. When a great man dies to-day, there will appear next morning in the columns of the newspapers an obituary notice. This will give an account of the man as he appeared to his contemporaries. It will tell of his parents, and where he was born, how he was educated, whom he married and what children he had, where he lived, what work he did and books he wrote, and other similar things. All this may be quite true; and yet, if one had been an intimate friend of the man, one might know that much was left unsaid. If, for example, he had been a deeply religious man, one might know something of his daily communion with God which, though it seldom appeared to the public eye, was nevertheless the secret of those accomplishments for which he was famous in the world and

of which the tale was told in the columns of the newspapers. Just so the synoptic Gospels seem like the obituary notice which gives our Lord as He was known to His contemporaries (though seen through the eyes of His followers); the Fourth Gospel gives Him as He revealed Himself to His most intimate friend.[1]

We began this chapter by raising the question whether the characterisation of our Lord in the Fourth Gospel is consistent with that in the Synoptists. I should like to end by suggesting that that question needs to be turned round the other way, and that what we have to ask is "Are the synoptic Gospels credible apart from the Fourth?" When we think of that tremendous Figure, the synoptic Christ, who spoke with authority and not as the scribes, who said to the leper "I will, be thou clean," who proclaimed His Messiahship and prophesied His return on the clouds of Heaven as the Son of Man, who spoke of giving His life as a "ransom for many," and who prayed as they nailed Him to the cross, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do"—when we think of Him, we cannot avoid the question, Are the records which tell of Him in any way credible apart from just such a life of inner dependence upon and communion with the Father as is presented to us in the Fourth Gospel?

[1] I am therefore in agreement with those scholars who hold that the Gospel in substance comes from St. John the son of Zebedee; but I am inclined to think that it was not St. John himself but a disciple of his who was the actual author.

EPILOGUE

This book has been mainly concerned with arguments of a kind which a certain school of historical criticism is apt to dismiss as "purely subjective considerations." But the words "subjective" and "objective" are dangerous tools to play about with, and there is sometimes more than a risk of confusion between what is truly subjectivism and all philosophical discussion. The study of history is not a simple thing; in it science, philosophy, and art must all combine and play their parts, and in each of these activities, not in any one alone, the problem of subjectivity will arise. The mind of the scientist is needed patiently to collect and tabulate and sift the evidence; the reflections of the philosopher make an indispensable contribution towards the interpretation of them; and only the artist within us can enable us from our own limited experience of life to enter into and understand the lives of other men.

The presupposition of knowledge is that there is something to be known and a mind capable of knowing it. But each of us has his own mind, and the danger of subjectivity comes from the fact that owing to its own peculiarities any one

mind may distort the truth in trying to make it its own. Life would be dull did we not each bring to our study of the universe his own way of looking at it; life would be chaotic were we not able to recognise the common truth which each in his own way is trying to grasp. The more completely one believes in the objective "givenness" of the object of study, the more he realises the impossibility of passing on his understanding of it by any system of demonstrative proof. In the last resort all that he can say is, "That is what I see; cannot you see it for yourself?" The only end to an argument is when one man can bring another to say, "Yes, now I see for myself."

But in all fields of human study the problems are vast and complicated, and it is only in small groups here and there that such agreement is reached. In certain fields of scientific inquiry this ideal is most nearly reached, for here, by isolating certain aspects of reality and concentrating attention upon them, it is possible to reduce the danger of subjectivity to a minimum, and to provide an object of study which appears in the same way to all trained observers. In history, on the other hand, the difficulty is at its greatest, for we are dealing with no single aspect of reality, but with the concrete living whole, the lives of men and women and the world they lived in.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it should be found inadequate to attempt to confine the study of history to those aspects of it which are

comparable to scientific laboratory work, and that the ideal of a satisfactory objectivity should be unobtainable by the method of directing attention solely to the collection, tabulation, and comparison of evidence. In this field, where philosopher and artist must co-operate with scientific observer, we have to fall back on the method of each man stating what he has come to see, and must be prepared to wait a long time for that agreement which is our goal.

The careful and dispassionate collection, tabulation, and comparison of such evidence as there is is, indeed, an indispensable element in the work; this provides an element of "givenness" on which our minds may work, and we must always be prepared, in the truly scientific spirit, to submit ourselves to what is thus "given." But our understanding of it, and, in cases of doubt, our decision as to precisely what is given, will arise from our other activities as artist or philosopher.

When the object of our study is Jesus Christ the importance of what we bring to it from these other activities is at its maximum. For we are trying to study One on whom are focussed the deepest philosophical ponderings of mankind, and One whose human life can only be understood by an extension of the religious experience of the student himself. Whatever view may be taken of Him, all must agree that His own life was essentially religious; His words and deeds all sprang from His inner life of communion with the Father. When we have done all

we can to collect and weigh the evidence for His life without allowing any religious or other prepossessions to influence us in this task, the only hope of understanding Him will be by pondering over the story of His life and trying to make real to ourselves the life of the man Christ Jesus in the light of our own experience of the service and companionship of God. We should be spared a plaguey lot of pedestrian commentaries if this were always borne in mind.

It is inevitable that he who attempts to write of Jesus Christ should reveal more of himself than of his Lord whom he is trying to understand. The element of subjectivity thus appears at its highest in such study; but by its patent self-revelation its sting is withdrawn, for as it lies upon the surface it can be reckoned with and discounted by those who read what he has written.

That anyone should attempt to interpret the life of Christ in the light of his own religious experience may seem at first sight to bespeak an arrogance of which the less said the better. No one is more conscious of this than the present writer. Unfortunately there is no other way, and in our common search for objectivity it is better that the basis of an effort at understanding should be recognised and openly confessed than that it should attempt to lie concealed.

One thing, however, may perhaps be said in extenuation of the present effort. Not only do I recognise the presumption of any attempt to understand and interpret the life of our Lord,

but as my study of the Gospels progresses I become more and more conscious of the gulf between that experience of the religious life which I must use because it is the only instrument I have, and the life which I am trying to understand. Throughout this book I have emphasised to the utmost possible degree the extent to which our Lord shared in our common human life. But in trying to understand Him on this basis I am continually discovering how far He passes beyond my comprehension, and I see Him standing upon a level far above anything I know. From the standpoint of the Christian religion I do not believe that we need set any limits to our conception of the extent to which during His life on earth He laid aside His divine attributes and lived as man. Faith in the Incarnation may require us to think of Him even as not being conscious of His godhead, but only of His Messiahship, during the days of His humiliation. It is as such that I have attempted to study Him in the pages of the Gospels, and to set forth some of the fruits of that study in this book. But for myself the result of this study is a growing conviction that although no more than what I have set down is required by any dogmatic presuppositions, the truth about the Jesus of History will ultimately be found to be such that I have erred, not indeed in exaggerating His manhood, but in underestimating the extent to which He lived on earth as incarnate God. But what it would be like to be God incarnate is a mystery that passes our compre-

hension. It is in His manhood that we can hope to know Him ; it is enough if in attempting to study Him as man we find One who cannot be confined within the bounds of manhood but draws us on to worship Him as God.

INDEX

Abrahams, I, 156
Apocryphal Gospels, 118, 121
Apollinarianism, 54
Aristotle, 44
Atonement, Doctrine of the, 71, ch. v, 140, 166, 167
Augustine, St., 98

Bacon, B. W., 179ff.
Baptism of Christ, 36, 63, 146, 152
Barnes, Bishop, 124
Baudouin, C., 134
Baur, F. C., 183ff.
Behaviourists, 80
Beloved Disciple, The, 175
Betrayal, The, 164ff., 168
Bevan, E., 73, 192
Body, 123ff.
Bosanquet, B., 137
Burkitt, F. C., 49, 142, 162, 178
Burney, F. C., 176

Cæsarea Philippi, 41, 66, 159, 194
Chalcedonian Definition, 1, 6, 9, 11, 51
Charles, R. H., 62
Charnwood, Lord, 174, 175, 188, 206
Childhood of Christ, 55, 151
Chronology, 142ff.
Conditional Immortality, 103
Conscience, 18
Coué, E., 134
Creation, Doctrine of, 96, 105
Credulity, 118, 120ff.
Creed, Earliest Christian, 58ff.
Creed, Nicene, 60, 190
Culpable Ignorance, 44

Denney, J., 91, 166
Disciples, 154
Dobschutz, E. Von, 50
Docetists, 9, 11
Dogmatic Necessity, 165, 195, 218
Dostoievsky, F., 29
Dougall, L., 77
Dramatic Thought, 8, 58ff., 71, 76, 95ff., 106ff.
Driver, G. R., 176
Drummond, J., 187

Easton, B. S., 156
Ebionites, 9, 11
Eddington, A. S., 7
Emmet, C. W., 50, 67, 77, 78
Empty Tomb, The, 128
Eschatological School, 10, 49–58, 60, 109
Eschatology, 42, ch. iv
Evil, Problem of, 96ff., 105
Evolution, 76

Faith, 133ff.
Fall, Doctrine of the, 96
Forgiveness, 93, 108, 153
Freedom, 80ff., 103, 139

Goguel, M., 163, 165
Good Shepherd, The, 200
Gore, Bishop, 10, 50, 52, 206
Gwatkin, H. M., 9

Harnack, A., 52
Historical Method, 112ff., 118, 119, 168, 209ff.
Holland, H. S., 2, 184
Hügel, F. Von, 104

Interimsethik, 24

Jacks, L. P., 19
John the Baptist, St., 68, 145, 154, 156

John the Elder, 175
John the son of Zebedee, St., 174ff.
Joseph, H. W. B., 126

Kingdom of God, The, 22, 32, ch. iv, 75, 106, 147, 148, 152, 155ff., 164, 194

Laird, J., 137
Lazarus, Raising of, 181

Marcan Outline, 144, 179
McClymont, J. A., 176
Mechanistic View, 120
Messianic Secret, 149ff., 168, 193
Metaphysics in Christ's Teaching, 57ff., 71
Miracles, ch. vi, 153ff., 199
Moffatt, J., 173, 174, 195
More, P. E., 186

Narborough, F. D. V., 65
Newman, J. H., 64
Nicene Creed, 60, 190

Omar Khayyám, 97
Optimism, 47, 74, 96ff., 148, 156
Originality of Christ's Teaching, 32, 70

Pain, 84ff., 92ff.
Papias, 163, 174
Parables, 153
Philosophy and Religion, 8, 58ff., 71, 75, 95ff.
Plato, 14, 16
Popularity of Christ, 148, 154ff.
Pringle-Pattison, A. S., 137
Prologue to Fourth Gospel, 187

Rashdall, H., 77, 91, 166
Rawlinson, A. E. J., 3, 65, 68, 100, 108, 144, 153, 168, 172, 186
Religion and Philosophy, 8, 58ff., 71, 75, 95ff.
Religionsgeschichtliche School, 5
Resurrection, The, 2, 112, 122ff., 157
Ritschl, A., 113
Robinson, D. S., 76

Sadhu Sundar Singh, 197
Sanday, W., 175
Schoolmen, 14
Schweitzer, A., 49, 50, 51, 53, 72
Scientific Method, 115, 210
Scott, E. F., 149, 168
Scribes and Pharisees, 39
Selwyn, E. G., 125
Sense of Obligation, 18
Sinlessness of Christ, 36, 42, 146
Son of Man, 5, 56, 62, 65ff., 107, 149, 152, 159, 161, 189, 208
Sorley, W. R., 76
Stanton, V. H., 174, 175, 177, 178, 183, 187
Strachey, Lytton, 183, 202
Suffering Servant, The, 65ff., 107ff., 159, 200

Temptation of Christ, 42, 63, 146, 152, 158, 160, 164
Time and Eternity, 95, 99, 105
Trial of Christ, 161
Trinity, Doctrine of the, 71, 100
Twelve, The, 155, 157, 158, 162

Uncritical Piety, 23, 52, 184
Universalism, 103
Universals and Particulars, 14

Venite, The, 97
Virgin Birth, The, 112, 122ff.

Webb, C. C. J., 53
Whitehead, A. N., 120
Wieman, H. N., 120
Williams, N. P., 96

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